

Bavarian News

Vol. 6, Nr. 1

U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt and Garmisch

January 20, 2010

HOHENFELS
OPEN WIDE
Dental town hall meeting gets to the root of family member care, Tricare benefits
PAGE 11

GARMISCH
DOWNTIME DUTY
A deployed military policeman and his working dog maximize their off time in Afghanistan
PAGE 18

ANSBACH
HIT THE SLOPES
Residents can find winter sports spots in their own backyard
PAGE 20

SCHWEINFURT
OINKERS AWAY
Elementary students sent “flat” mascots to the front lines with 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment
PAGE 22



Huddle up!
Join us for the Community Huddle, a new monthly meeting for all community members that combines meetings like the town hall and Senior Spouses Roundtable. The first Community Huddle will be held Jan. 28, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Tower View Restaurant, Main Post, Bldg. 209.

5-night stay
Win a 5-night vacation at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort! Complete the IMCOM-Europe Postal Online-Survey at www.milmail.org
See page 12 for details.

What you're looking for	
Opinion Editorial	2
News	3-8, 24, 25
What's Happening	12-13
Travel	15
Medical	16
Movies	26
AAFES	27

Pets get improved care options



Capt. Leah Tingley of the Vilseck Branch Veterinary Services, introduces herself to Max, a 6-year-old Labrador retriever, during a visit at the Vilseck Veterinary Treatment Facility, Jan. 11.

New wellness packages ensure the furriest family members stay healthy

Story and photos by
MOLLY HAYDEN
Bavarian News

Max, a 6-year-old Labrador retriever, sat patiently under his owner Kelley Cunningham’s legs as they waited for his name to be called at the Vilseck Veterinary Treatment Facility, Jan. 11.

Resting his head on his paws, he howled, summoning “pets” from passersby.

“He’s a gentle soul,” said Cunningham, smiling as she patted the blonde hair on Max’s head.

Max’s good health has been maintained through routine check-ups. For this visit, Cunningham brought him to the VTF for preventative treatment of dysplasia, an ailment common in his breed.

“He’s been limping a bit ... I just want to make sure he’s alright,” said Cunningham. “He’s my baby.”

Though coincidental, Cunningham’s preventative actions for her pet are on par with a recent standard set by the U.S. Army Europe Regional Veterinary Command.

The new program, initiated Jan. 15, outlines veterinary services like basic deworming, microchipping, fecal floatation and vaccinations, and groups them into an overall “wellness package.”

“A wellness package will provide comprehensive preventive medical care that is tailored to your pet’s specific needs and stage of life,” said Maj. Rebecca Evans, chief of the Veterinary Command’s Future Operations, in a news release.

The intent is to emphasize routine wellness examinations and interaction with a veterinary health care professional instead of vaccinations as the reason for a visit to the veterinary clinic.

“VETCOM will embrace this effort to provide the best care to our patients and support to our clients through comprehensive disease prevention, early diagnosis of any problems and appropriate treatment,” said Col. David Rolfe, commander of VETCOM, in a news release.

The standardization of these services will parallel the veterinary profession’s move toward wellness, promote public health and provide consistency in veterinary care, regardless of military station. Fee schedules will be restructured, but the goal continues to be high quality care at the lowest cost. Fees

See PLANS Page 25

Army Family Covenant delivers programs, services

by KEVIN CROUCH
FMWRC Public Affairs

ALEXANDRIA, Va. - The Army unveiled the Army Family Covenant Oct. 8, 2007, pledging a commitment to provide Soldiers and families a quality of life commensurate with their dedicated service and sacrifice to the nation.

Indeed, the Covenant is the service’s promise to take care of not only Soldiers, but family members who also serve side-by-side with them, while providing unconditional support to keep the Army strong.

The Army Family Covenant is comprised of commitments to enhance Soldier and family readiness. But two years after the initial signing, many Soldiers and Families are still unsure what the program is supposed to provide or the makeup of its content.

Overall, the Army’s Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Command is the organization charged with developing MWR policy, plans, strategies and standards; supporting Army commanders to implement Family and MWR programs; and operate and manage assigned MWR activities.

See AFC Page 25

AAFES fuel prices a value

Story and photo by
Lt. Col. WAYNE MAROTTO
AAFES Europe Public Affairs

MAINZ-KASTEL, Germany - Let’s face it, no one likes the price of gasoline at the pump. But did you ever wonder how AAFES-Europe calculates gas prices at its 22 direct -operated gas stations in Germany? Or why gas is more expensive in Europe than the U.S.?

“Gas prices seem to be a little higher than average in Germany, but it is a lot better than paying for gas off post,” said Steve Williams as he filled his car at the Mainz-Kastel AAFES gas station. “It (AAFES gas) is definitely a good value compared to the economy.”

AAFES overseas fuel prices, as approved by its military board of directors, are based on the U.S. Department of Energy’s weekly average for each grade of gasoline in the continental United States, plus the unique incremental costs incurred in each overseas market.

AAFES provides gasoline to authorized personnel in Germany per Army Europe Regulation 600-17. Customers use the Fuel Ration Card program and are allotted liters of fuel based on the weight and horsepower of their vehicle.

See FUEL Page 25

IN THIS EDITION

Tax season awaits
Specialists offer new and proven techniques at local tax offices

PAGE 4

Kickin’ it in Cairo
Travelers in Cairo experience culture, ancient history

PAGE 15

See-through walls
Scientists continue to develop radar imaging devices for combat

PAGE 24

Army delivers on promise to put families first

The Army unveiled the Army Family Covenant, Oct. 8, 2007, institutionalizing the Army's commitment to providing Soldiers and Families – Active, Guard, and Reserve – a quality of life commensurate with their quality of service. However, as I travel around the Army meeting with Soldiers and Families I'm surprised to find that many are not familiar with the Army Family Covenant and the commitment Army leadership has made to provide a better quality of life to Soldiers and Families. We are delivering the Army Family Covenant with a focus on five specific areas: standardization



and funding of existing programs and services, increasing accessibility and quality of health care, improving Soldier and Family housing, ensuring excellence in schools, youth services and child care and expanding education and employment opportunities for Family members. Some accomplishments over the past two years include: standardized Army community staffing and programs at all garrisons; added 1,079 Family Readiness Support Assistants positions to provide administrative and logistical support to commanders and FRG leaders; funded Exceptional Family Member respite care providing up to 40 hours of care per month for

Families; increased primary care visits to more than seven million people, meeting access standards for 90 percent of acute, routine and specialty appointments; authorized Tricare standard coverage for more than 500,000 eligible members of the Selective Reserve and their Family members and lowered the co-payment; funded the Training Barracks Modernization Program to allow 11,306 Soldiers to move into newly designed or renovated barracks in FY '09, introduced the First Sergeants Barracks Initiative to enhance single Soldier quality of life; reduced financial burden on Army Families by eliminating CYSS registration fees and reducing program fees, collaborated with more than 373 school districts to support military connected students

transferring to new school districts and increased placement of military spouses through the Army Spouse Employment Program, a partnership with Fortune 500 companies and government agencies to provide employment opportunities. We are indeed making progress on delivering the Army Family Covenant, but we have much more work to do. I am dedicated to deliver on the Army leadership's promise to continue to provide the best care and quality of life possible to Soldiers and their Families. Our commitment to delivering the Army Family Covenant is non-negotiable. We will not depart from this commitment. I would ask that we always take the time to accentuate the positive. We have so very much to be thankful

for when it comes to health care, housing, services and programs and many other things. Many times we immediately start talking about negative items, and many of those conversations are based on anecdotal evidence without firsthand knowledge. Let's be grateful for what we have, and strive together to improve. An attitude of appreciation will go a long way. Optimism is a combat multiplier. As always, thanks for your continued service to our Army, and our nation. Together we are making history.

*Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch
Commanding General
TMCOM*

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Training area celebrates 100 years in 2010

The new year has just begun, but we are already off and running. We have many initiatives we are working for 2010. Our biggest event this year is the 100th anniversary celebration of the Grafenwoehr Training Area. This is a joint German-American event that begins the week of June 27 and will continue into our Fourth of July holiday weekend. This year we will be using a specially created logo to mark this momentous occasion. The logo does a great job of incorporating the importance of the training area and honoring our German-American partnership. Our suicide prevention efforts continue and our goal is to have an Army Strong community that supports and enhances the resilience of our Soldiers, civilian employees and families. Last year, we made great strides when we established our garrison Suicide Prevention



Task Force (SPTF) and established 12 focus areas that are being executed and tracked. Establishing the task force allows us to have a community-wide holistic approach as demonstrated by our top-notch professionals and specialists. These include the chaplaincy, Bavarian Medical Activity, tenant unit leadership, emergency services, health promotion and preventive medicine experts, and many others. Safety remains our top priority. We have already implemented our winter safety plan several times by delaying the school and work report times and releasing folks early to minimize driving hazards. Our community has embraced a culture of safety and we all own a shared safety responsibility. Key to this culture is when we *see something*, we should *do something* to prevent accidents. We all need to ensure snow and ice are cleared from our immediate walkways and water from our

entry areas to prevent slips and falls, and to ensure our young ones are properly dressed for the environment. *See something, do something* is about all of us taking care of our community. Let's all attend to our first ever "Community Huddle" to understand our new JMTC Campaign Plan, Jan. 28, at the Tower View Conference Center on main post from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Brig. Gen. Salazar will be at this event to showcase where we are going as a unified community, and we will recognize our Combined Federal Campaign volunteers and other key contributors. The "Community Huddle" is open to the public and is a joint venture among our units, agencies and supporting services. This important forum's purpose is to inform ourselves of upcoming activities or changes, share best practices and recognize contributions. For predictability, we will host this forum at the same time on that last Thursday of each month. We



encourage all community members to attend so you can understand and help disseminate the information. And as always, anyone with comments or suggestions can ensure immediate attention by submitting through the "ICE" system. ICE is easy to use and ensures we have visibility of concerns and applause – ensuring our community remains Army Strong!

*Col. Chris Sorenson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

CSM CORNER



Inclement weather plan for everyone's safety

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season. The weather here in Grafenwoehr since the first of the year has gotten off to a snowy start. Because of this, we want to make sure that we all know and understand the garrison's Inclement Weather Plan. On a given day in the case of poor weather conditions, the command may direct a two-hour delayed reporting, an early release or a closure of the garrison, which will apply to all personnel, tenant units and directorates including DODDS schools. It is important to watch for these directives. A two-hour delay will be announced by 4:30 a.m. on the morning of the delay on the garrison Web site at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil, on the command information channel and on the automated weather hot line at DSN 475-ROAD (7623) or CIV 09641-83-7623. AFN radio will make announcements beginning at 5 a.m. on FM 98.5, FM 107.6 and AM 1107. Delays are directed to give the garrison time to clear roads and parking lots. This means that all personnel must report two hours after their scheduled reporting time. School busses will pick up children from bus stops two hours after the normal time. Only those personnel who are part of



key and essential functions may drive on post during this time. When preparing to drive, use your best judgment and know the dangers of your route. When in doubt, don't drive. Always give the snow plows a wide berth. It is also important to know the meanings of posted color-coded road conditions. Green conditions mean that roads are OK and there are no hazards. Amber means drivers must drive with caution due to reduced visibility or snowfall as forecasted or occurring. Red conditions mean that only mission-essential travel is permitted and driving conditions are hazardous. Black means that roads are closed and only official emergency vehicles are permitted to drive. Army safe is Army strong. Be safe and always prepare for winter weather and follow command directives for your safety and the safety of others. As we stay vigilant and take precautions, we must also stay strong in the fight against suicide. It is very important that all members of the garrison look out for ourselves and the well-being of our battle buddies and family members. Suicide is still a real issue and the more we stay up-to-date and educated about it, the more lives we may be able to save. These hot lines are available 24 hours a

day, seven days a week to assist in suicide prevention or counseling for other reasons. Professionals are always available at these numbers for confidential counseling. 09641-83-LIFE Chaplain Hot line 0162-296-0838 Military Police Hotline 09662-83-114 Sexual Assault Hotline 0162-296-0661 Emergency Services 09641-83-117 You may also visit Behavioral Health. On Rose Barracks, it is in building 316 Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Friday from 7:30 a.m. to noon. Call them at DSN 476-2995, CIV 09662-83-2995. On Main Post, visit the facility in building 475 Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday from 7 a.m. to noon. Reach them at DSN 475-8358, CIV 09641-83-8358. You may also contact Army Community Services for counseling resources on Rose Barracks at DSN 476-83-2650, CIV 09641-83-2650 or on Main Post at DSN 475-8371, CIV 09641-83-8371. Remember that it is not only okay to seek help, it is a sign of strength. Start the new year off right and stay safe and stay strong.

*Command Sgt. Maj.
William Berrios
CSM, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

CFC is still a resounding success

Thank you for your generous contributions to this year's Combined Federal Campaign Overseas. Soldiers and civilian employees from among the widespread commands of the U.S. Army Europe and the Installation Management Command, Europe Region, have pledged more than \$2 million to worthy nonprofit charities. Notably, much of the money that you have contributed will remain right here in Europe – to help our Soldiers, civilian workforce and Families in a variety of important ways. We are especially proud that so many of you made the decision to contribute this year. This is truly significant at a time when many of our fellow citizens and host-nation counterparts have experienced great economic difficulties. Although many in the Army Family were also affected by this economic downturn, you still chose to unselfishly sacrifice your personal resources to aid others who need our help. You are the very best of America and have once again demonstrated that Soldiers, Army civilians and our Families can and do make a world of difference to the quality of life of others less fortunate than ourselves. Again, many thanks for your thoughtfulness, compassion and outstanding generosity.

*Gen. Carter F. Ham
Commanding General
U.S. Army Europe*

*Command Sgt. Maj.
Ralph R. Beam
U.S. Army Europe*

*Diane M. Devens
Director
TMCOM-Europe*

*Command Sgt. Maj.
Tracey E. Aubiyya
TMCOM-Europe*

Bavarian News

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

Producer: **MILCOM Advertising Agency**
Roswitha Lehner
Zeilaeckerstr. 35 · 92637 Weiden · Telefax 0961-67050-32
Internet: **www.milcom.de**

Bavarian News is an unofficial biweekly publication authorized by AR 360-1. Editorial views are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. The paper is an offset publication prepared and edited by the U.S. Army Garrison-Grafenwoehr Public Affairs Office. Bavarian News is printed by Werbeagentur und Verlag Roswitha Lehner and distributed every other Wednesday. Circulation is 9,800 copies. Submissions are welcome. Send letters to the editor and commentaries to PAO, Unit 28130, Attn: Bavarian News, APO AE 09114, or e-mail them to usaggnws@graf.eur.army.mil. Telephone the Bavarian News at 475-7113 or fax to 475-7935 with story ideas and events.

USAG G Commander
Col. Chris Sorenson
USAG G Public Affairs Officer
DSN 475-8103, CIV 09641-83-8103
Kim Gillespie
Bavarian News Editor
DSN 475-7113, CIV 09641-83-7113
Jeremy S. Buddemeier

Assistant Editor
DSN 475-7775, CIV 09641-83-7775
Melissa Wolff
Grafenwoehr Correspondent
DSN 475-8886, CIV 09641-83-8886
Molly Hayden
Garmisch Correspondent
DSN 440-3701, CIV 08821-750-3701
John Reese

Schweinfurt Correspondents
DSN 354-1400, CIV 09721-96-1400
Emily Athens, Nathan Van Schaik
Hohenfels Correspondent
DSN 466-4917, CIV 09472-83-4917
Kristin Bradley
Ansbach Correspondent
DSN 468-1600, CIV 0981-183-791
Ronald Toland

‘Emotions Matter’ teaches expression

Story and photo by
ROB MCILVAINE
FMWRC Public Affairs

FORT LEWIS, Wash. – “Emotions Matter,” an exhibit designed to provide support to military families by sharing strategies for dealing with emotions in a playful way, could be traveling to Army garrisons soon.

“My five-year-old son has been in counseling for the past two years and the ‘Emotions Matter’ exhibit at the Fort Lewis Grandstaff Library was an amazing outlet for his feelings and emotions,” Juli Demery said.

“The exhibit had all the means of expression that he had been working on in his therapy. It was great to have an outlet for him to express his feelings and know that it’s OK to feel the way he feels and to work through his feelings in a safe environment other than in his counselor’s office.

“The library even had the same books his counselor has. Everything supported what his counselor has been doing, so the extra venue really helped my son make leaps and bounds in his therapy,” Demery said.

Created by the Children’s Museum of Tacoma, the exhibit is based on Dr. John Gottman’s “5 Steps of Emotion Coaching.” Gottman is Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington’s Department of Psychology.

“His research is very powerful,” said Debbie Kray, education director at the museum.

The Emotions Matter exhibit provides opportunities for parents and children to learn independently or together through five activity stations based on Gottman’s five steps, including Emotional Awareness, Connecting, Listening, Naming Emotions and Finding Good Solutions.

Emotional Awareness pairs a face to an emotion and helps emotion recognition in adults and children. Connecting matches facial expressions to items and shows how a child connects emotions to events. Listening uses a sound board where adults learn to listen with empathy and honor children’s emotions. Naming Emotions is a matching game that helps children identify and name emotions. Finding Good Solutions is a playhouse with open-ended activities to allow adults



Andrea draws out her emotions on the Magna Doodle in the playhouse of the Emotions Matter exhibit. The exhibit has been dismantled at Fort Lewis and is currently being stored at the Children’s Museum of Tacoma, awaiting its next trip to another garrison.

to support children as they explore appropriate emotional responses.

“Each of the five stations is used to help parents and children identify emotions through play and through a variety of hands-on operations,” said Georgia Cartner, youth services specialist, Fort Lewis library system.

“Children can make faces in a mirror, listen to the sounds of emotions, write about emotions using poetry, read about emotions with the provided books, and draw about emotions with the Magna Doodle. It’s an interactive exhibit to be shared by families, caregivers, teachers and children.”

According to Kray, parents do not need, nor should they try, to emotion coach all the time. But if they can just stop and listen to their children, help them build the skills to share how

they are feeling, and think through what they can do about it, it makes a difference.

Gottman’s research has shown that just by using emotion coaching techniques 30 percent of the time, children can be taught strategies to self-regulate their emotions.

“In early education, that’s huge. With self regulation, children gain the ability to attend to other tasks and be school ready,” Kray said.

The popular exhibit travelled throughout Pierce County, Wash., library branches before moving to Fort Lewis’s library system, thanks to a generous grant by the U.S. Army’s Child, Youth and School Services (CYSS), through Sandy Johnson, CLEOS (Child, Youth & School Services Liaison, Education and

Outreach Services) Administrator at Fort Lewis. She knew how tough it had been for the children of parents who had been through many deployments.

“I just thought that if the library had the space and felt as strongly as we did about this that we should have Emotion Matters here on Fort Lewis for all our parents and families,” Johnson said.

Emotions are a natural part of daily life but for children emotions can also be a time of frustration, giving them a sense they don’t have control.

“On the parent side, it gives us one more strategy to deal with difficult situations,” Kray said. “None of us are 100 percent ready to parent when our child comes along, and at emotional times we can often fall into what we experienced in our childhood, which may or may not be the best example

of how to positively help children.”

“At the children’s museum as parents transitioned between playing and leaving, the staff often witnessed the stress and emotion that arose. Teaching our staff about emotion coaching was great to help them model ways to positively help children in emotional moments.”

The kits produced by the museum for the exhibit have also been used by children in other venues.

“We have found the strategies and activity kits we produced for this exhibit to have endless opportunities,” Kray said. “We have worked with our local children’s hospital and the activities we created for them were often used by their life specialists in one-on-one time with patients to help them gauge children’s emotional state and pain levels in a playful way.

“Play is a wonderful thing. It is the work of children. And what better way to help children build the skills to help them deal with some of life’s most challenging moments,” Kray said.

According to Gottman, emotional awareness and sensitivity – more than IQ, help determine success and happiness in all facets of life, including marriage and career.

“In my research, I discovered that love by itself wasn’t enough,” Gottman said. “We found that concerned, warm and involved parents often had attitudes toward their emotions and their children’s emotions that got in the way of talking to their children when the child was sad or afraid or angry. The secret to being an emotionally intelligent parent lay in how parents interacted with their children when emotions ran hot.”

Since it is only one exhibit, Kray, who was in charge of developing the Emotions Matter exhibit, would also be open to talking about developing versions that could be in multiple locations.

For more information and a pdf on the loan information, visit www.childrensmuseumoftacoma.org/traveling-exhibits.

Emotions Matter was created by a grant from the Child Care Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and support from The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, The Boeing Company and Talaris Research Institute.

Deployments don’t get easier with experience

*Army Wife Network Public Affairs
News Release*

LAWTON, Okla. — Army Wife Network frequently asks spouses in its network if deployments get easier or harder over time. It’s not a trick question but rather a pervasive myth to those spouses who have not yet experienced multiple deployments and neighbors who never will.

A recently published study by Rand supports what Army Wife Network has found to be true from many families who have endured long and frequent deployments, deployments don’t get easier.

Interviewed on NPR’s “Tell Me More,” Starlett Henderson, the Network co-founder, discussed Rand’s study on longer parental deployments and the effects it has on her children and herself as the parent at home.

“The repeated deployments really contribute to something called compassion fatigue, maybe in our neighbors, and then passion fatigue in our own families,” said Henderson. “So, it’s just that we’re all getting tired.”

“Most people in their second or third (deployment) might be tempted to say that, yes, they do get easier. But, as we experience our fourth and fifth, we get tired. And, it’s harder just to manage the differences, you know, the older children, your own age and your own fatigue.”

In the interview and study, author Anita Chandra makes the point that



the mental health of the children undergoing long deployments is directly related to the mental health of the caregiver. This is another facet found to be true among the wives and families who Army Wife Network supports.

What started out as a mental health saver and therapy for Tara Crooks, creator of Army Wife Talk Radio — Army Wife Network’s beginnings, has proven to be relief and empowerment to hers and countless other military families online.

Interviewer Michel Martin recommends a spa day in light of that fact.

“We do take those, yes. And it is definitely recommended for other spouses,” Henderson said.

To hear Star’s full interview, visit http://public.npr.org/anon.npr-mp3/npr/tmm/2009/12/20091209_tmm_04.mp3?dl=1.

To check out Army Wife Network’s online community, visit www.armywifetwork.com.

To read Rand Scientist Anita Chandra’s study, visit www.rand.org/news/press/2009/12/07/?ref=homepage&key=t_soldier_kisses_daughter.

Rules exist for on-post clubs

by JESS HOFBERGER
JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

What civilians call a “club” or a “group” the Army calls a “private organization,” and when the Army has a name for something, it also has an acronym — in this case “PO.” Examples include Boy and Girl Scouts, Parent-Teacher Associations, community clubs, Masons and chess clubs. Private organizations fill an important role for the Army because they offer opportunities for community interaction and improve morale. If you are a member or officer of any private organization operating in the Grafenwoehr footprint, there are a few things you should look after in the new year.

Technically speaking, private organizations are self-sustaining special interest groups set up by people acting outside the scope of any official governmental capacity. This means the members of the private organization choose their own goals, activities and by-laws.

However, in exchange for the right to operate on base, private organizations must follow a number of community rules. These rules are designed to prevent extremist organizations incompatible with Army values from gaining a toehold in our community, and also protect the government from any liability associated with the private organization. The first of these rules is that every two years each private organization must apply to the garrison commander for permission to operate on post.

The dawn of the new year presents an excellent opportunity for private organizations to ensure they are in compliance with the garrison’s private organization policy. This is not a difficult task and one which should be looked upon as an opportunity to focus the membership on the organization’s goals for the year.

Although private organizations are required to renew their written requests to operate on base only every two years, certain information must be reported more often and a yearly review of these requirements will keep this process from becoming burdensome.

Maria Riss at MWR can assist private organizations with preparing application packets and record keeping. Her office is located at USAG Grafenwoehr MWR, FMD, Building 539, Room 130, or by telephone at DSN 475-6978.



Hofberger

of Forces Agreement status (must be greater than half); and a brief financial audit (this can be done by a committee of members, but not by the treasurer).

Getting insurance and bonding for private organizations is neither difficult nor expensive in Germany. Do not let this insurance requirement prevent your organization from properly registering. If you have been asked by your organization to obtain insurance and don’t know where to start, try asking members of other private organizations for the names of insurance agents with whom they have had good luck.

Private organizations must be approved at each specific garrison on which they wish to operate. For example, the fact that an organization is authorized to operate on USAG Bamberg does not mean it is authorized to operate on USAG Grafenwoehr, unless and until it receives a separate approval from USAG Grafenwoehr.

Finally, it’s just common sense, but private organizations in the Grafenwoehr community will not unlawfully deny membership to any person because of race, color, creed, sex, age, disability or national origin.

Private organization recruitment practices must not involve, nor give the appearance of involving, compulsion, coercion, reprisal or influence. (In plain English, no discrimination, no hazing).

Private organizations are an important addition to the Grafenwoehr quality of life and with just a little annual maintenance the officers of these organizations can keep their organizations in good standing with the community.

Editor’s Note: Jess Hofberger is an administrative law attorney at the JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

Preparation key for filing taxes right

The first in a four-part series on tips and techniques for preparing this year’s taxes

by DENVER MAKLE
JMTC Public Affairs

With wage and tax statements available for Soldiers and civilian employees online at www.mypay.dfas.mil and most banks and investment companies mailing reports of interest, dividends and capital gains, the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command’s Tax Center personnel are gearing up to provide free tax preparation and e-filing services throughout Bavaria.

The tax centers in Ansbach, Illesheim, Bamberg, Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Schweinfurt and Vilseck will be open for business, beginning Feb. 1, 2010. Information on locations and phone numbers for each is available at www.hqjmtc.army.mil/Organization/Special_Personal_Staff/Staff_SJA/Staff_SJA_TaxOffice.html.

“Military I.D. cardholders, including Soldiers, Department of Defense civilians and retirees, who wish to use the free tax preparation and e-filing services should have all their documents, such as prior year tax return, W-2s, mortgage statements and receipts ready when they meet with preparers. It saves time,” said Brad Huestis, chief of Client Services Division at the JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate. “Taxpayers with complicated returns should take extra time to ensure that their documents are in order.”

A tax return is complicated when it includes capital gains, rental real estate income or loss, foreign earned income or foreign taxes paid, or multiple state income tax returns, said Huestis.

Last tax season, tax centers throughout the region assisted 11,792 tax filers at no charge, saving more than \$1.5 million in preparation and filing fees, and generating more than \$22.4 million in direct deposit refunds.

Huestis outlined some important tax law changes that take effect this year, with a few



Representatives are local tax offices are ready for the 2009 tax season.

For a list of 2009 tax credits, see page 24.

reminders about rules that commonly trip up taxpayers every year.

“This year, taxpayers have the opportunity to take advantage of new tax credits,” he said. “Credits are far more valuable to taxpayers than deductions,

because deductions only reduce the amount of income subject to tax (for example at a 20 percent tax rate), while credits are applied to your tax bill at the very end when one dollar actually equals one dollar.”

Editor’s Note: Tracy Cooklin, JMTC tax center coordinator, and Brad Huestis, chief of Client Services Division at the JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, contributed reporting.

Tax Centers

- Ansbach/Katterbach**
Hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments
Katterbach Kaserne, Bldg. 5817 (Law Center); DSN 467-2324; CIV 09802-83-2324

Ansbach/Illesheim
Hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments
Stork Barracks, Bldg. 6506 (Law Center); DSN 467-4511, CIV 09841-83-4511

Garmisch
By appointment only via Hohenfels Tax Center
- Artillery Kaserne, Bldg. 202; DSN 466-2836, 467-2324; CIV 09802-83-2324

Bamberg
Hours: M - F: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments
Sat: 9-11 a.m., appointments only (only in February)
Warner Barracks, Bldg. 7000 (Law Center), 4th Floor; DSN 469-8261/2, CIV 09513-00-8262

Grafenwoehr
Hours: T/W/Th/F: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments
M: 10 a.m.-6 p.m., walk-in and
- scheduled appointments
Grafenwoehr Training Area, Bldg. 216, 2nd floor; DSN 475-9258, CIV 09641-83-9258

Hohenfels
Hours: M/W/F: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments
T/Th: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments
1st Saturday of each month, 9 a.m.-noon, appointment only
Hohenfels Training Area, Bldg. 313 (Law Center); DSN 466-2836, CIV 09472-83-2836

Schweinfurt
Hours: M-F: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Conn Barracks, Bldg. 1 (Law Center); DSN 353-8286, CIV 09721-96-8286

Vilseck
Hours: M/W/F: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments
T/Th: 9 a.m.-6 p.m., walk-in and scheduled appointments
Rose Barracks, Bldg. 245 (Law Center), 1st Floor; DSN 476-2714, CIV 09662-83-2714

VAT rules help buyers avoid headaches

*IMCOM-Europe Region Public Affairs
News Release*

HEIDELBERG, Germany - Thinking of using a value added tax relief form to buy a house or maybe to buy your host nation landlord a nice gift. Wrong. VAT relief doesn’t do that.

There are rules and regulations that govern how VAT relief can be used, and according to Rafael Wunsch, program manager and business consultant for Installation Management Command-Europe Region, individuals need to be aware of how to use VAT forms to avoid negative repercussions.

Wunsch explained that before a person attempts to use a VAT relief form, it is important the individual understands that tax relief from host nation value added tax for personal purchases is not an entitlement of U.S. forces members stationed in Europe — it’s a privilege granted by the host nation.

“VAT relief is intended to provide individual tax relief for personal purchases for authorized personnel. It is not intended to help you purchase real estate or help you avoid paying taxes on gifts for nonauthorized personnel,” said Wunsch. “It’s important we use the tax forms as intended to avoid repercussions caused by misuse, such as loss of individual privileges.”

For that reason, he said, it is important to know and to follow tax relief rules. Tax relief forms are not discount coupons, but they are important host nation tax documents, similar to a U.S. 1040 tax form.

Not following the rules will eventually have consequences, noted Wunsch.

In addition to loss of tax relief privileges, Wunsch explained that host nation fiscal authorities could file charges against individuals for tax evasion. Also, individuals could be required to pay unpaid taxes plus potential fines.

“General tax relief rules are fairly easy to understand and to follow,” said Wunsch. “A couple key guidelines include not buying things for ineligible persons and not buying things for business purposes or resale.”



He explained that, generally, items should be for individual use or for authorized personnel. Official guidelines are contained in Army in Europe Regulation 215-6. Individuals may also seek information at local garrison VAT offices or from program management.

According to Wunsch, the most common issues individuals encounter include conducting unauthorized repairs and using forms for utilities.

The solution to any potential conflict is to talk with the VAT office or program management prior to the purchase to ensure you use your VAT form correctly, said Wunsch, because forms are tracked and purchases are monitored.

“Keep in mind that host nation rules require us to manage all VAT forms within a central database. This database is designed to identify unusual buying behaviors and red-flag certain transactions for closer scrutiny,” said Wunsch. “In addition, program management and U.S. forces customs personnel screen and spot-check transactions to monitor for abuse of the system. Suspected violations are reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency

for follow-up.”

There are some administrative requirements for VAT form users. Individuals must turn in properly filled out white copies of VAT forms in a reasonable time after the purchase, said Wunsch. Also, individuals must turn in all VAT forms — used and unused — upon departure from Germany.

“Keep in mind that shoppers can use German VAT forms only with companies that report earnings in Germany,” said Wunsch, who added that vendors are not required to accept VAT forms.

“Ask the vendor before making a purchase or placing the order if VAT forms are accepted,” he said. “Also, be aware that in case German fiscal authorities deny a tax relief transaction, you are responsible to pay the taxes (can be a few years after the transaction). That will for example occur if the receipt/purchase date falls outside the ‘valid from’ and the ‘valid until’ dates in field 3 of the VAT form.” Wunsch said that tax-relief handouts with more information in English and German are available at VAT offices.

Understanding and observing the rules for Value Added Tax can help U.S. citizens living overseas save money and avoid penalties. Common mistakes include using the forms to pay for utilities or telecommunication expenses, like phones and Internet.

Congress gives gift of time, tax for IRAs

by CHRISTOPHER HANIFIN
JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

In addition to numerous holiday celebrations, the 2009 tax year also came to a close in December. Well, sort of. Congress has given taxpayers extra time to invest in their retirement funds; individuals have until April 15, 2010, to invest in an Individual Retirement Account, or IRA. For once, time is on your side.

Community members should start compiling their receipts and other tax information as the 7th Joint Multinational Training Command Tax Assistance Offices will begin helping folks with their tax returns.

Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)

IRAs are simply custodial accounts or trusts created for the exclusive benefit of an individual or his or her beneficiaries. They are very similar to Certificates of Deposits (commonly called CDs) where money is placed into an account and it can appreciate with certain tax benefits. The only trade-off is that all of these accounts have limits as to when the account owner can withdrawal the deposited funds. IRAs are generally exempt from federal income tax when held for a specified time and are usually sponsored by banks, credit unions, savings and loans, mutual funds, insurance companies and other financial organizations.

IRAs typically come in two forms: a “Traditional IRA” and a “Roth IRA.” A Traditional IRA was created as a basic personal savings plan account that gives individuals tax advantages for setting aside money for retirement. Generally, amounts in Traditional IRA (including earnings and gains) are not taxed until distributed (withdrawn).

Contributions made to a Traditional IRA may be fully or partially deductible, depending on the person’s financial and tax circumstances. The only criterion for eligibility is having sufficient income to make the contribution.

However, the best provision of a Traditional IRA - the tax-deductibility of contributions - has strict eligibility requirements. Transactions in the account, like interest and capital gains, are not subject to tax while in the account; upon withdrawal from the account, the money withdrawn is subject to taxation.

Like Traditional IRAs, Roth IRAs are also personal savings accounts that give individuals tax advantages for setting aside money for retirement. However, unlike a Traditional IRA, Roth IRA contributions are never tax-deductible, but qualified withdrawals are tax free. Under a Roth IRA, individuals don’t get a tax break when they deposit funds, but do get a tax break when they take funds out, if done properly. Roth IRAs are something everyone should consider.

Traditional IRAs

An individual can deposit \$5,000 (up to \$6,000 for those over 50) into a retirement account today. However, that person may or may not get a tax deduction on the amount that is deposited, depending on his or her income level. When the individual takes out the money at retirement, he or she will pay income taxes on that money at his or her current taxable rate (generally that rate will be significantly lower at retirement). Individuals who need to take out money before they reach age 59.5 will likely pay a 10 percent penalty in addition to income taxes.

Roth IRAs

The beauty of a Roth IRA is that an individual pays the IRS upfront. What does this mean? Under a Roth IRA, individuals pay income taxes on the money at their current rate before they make the deposit, but don’t have to pay taxes upon withdrawal. So, if there is any appreciation or growth in the account, the individual doesn’t pay taxes on that amount.

The Roth IRA is also flexible when the money is withdrawn for retirement. Unlike a traditional IRA, for a Roth IRA, a person doesn’t have to withdraw the money at 70 - or ever. The money can be given to a person’s heirs.

Unlike a traditional IRA, which penalizes for early withdrawals, individuals can withdraw contributions from a Roth at any time with no taxes or penalties. For those over 59.5 years old who otherwise meet the requirements for a qualified distribution, all withdrawals are tax free.

Considering an IRA — particularly a Roth IRA — should make a person’s retirement situation easier. For example, if a person deposited \$2,500 a year (half the allowed amount for someone under 50 years of age) for 20 years into a Roth IRA and we assume an 8 percent rate of return (compounded annually) for growth, that person would have deposited \$50,000 in principal and would have a total value of \$123,557.30 at the end of the 20-year period.

Editor’s Note: Christopher Hanifin is the chief of the Vilseck Legal Assistance Division, JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

Soldiers build bonds in Bogen

Story and photo by
Spc. JERRY WILSON
2SCR Public Affairs

BOGEN, Germany – More than 325 troopers from FIRES Squadron of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment traveled to Bogen, Germany, Dec. 16, to take part in the official partnership ceremony with the German 4th Armored Engineer Battalion.

Lt. Col. Klaus Raab, commander of the Panzer 4th Armored Engineer Battalion, began the ceremony by invoking the blessing of Saint Barbara, the patron saint of artillerymen.

“May the sponsorship between our two units be under the protection of the holy Barbara,” Raab said. “May our nations and our companionship be as strong and firm as her belief in Christianity.”

Raab expressed his unit’s excitement over this newly developed partnership.

“My Soldiers of Engineer Battalion 4 are extremely honored to be joined in sponsorship with such an experienced and battle proven unit of our most important ally,” he said.

The commander expressed the importance of these alliances between U.S. and German forces.

“Sharing our experiences, learning from each other, and avoiding lessons to be relearned,” Raab said, “are important goals worth working towards.”

“All of us should recollect our common values and history, and look forward to our common future and training in order to develop the best capabilities and the best degree of interoperability,” he said. “With such an understanding and capabilities, we will be able to stand and fight together in coming missions abroad.”

Lt. Col. Steven Bergosh, the FIRES Squadron commander, spoke of the tremendous opportunities this new partnership will bring to both parties involved.

“Today we bring to both of our units opportunity,” he said.



Lt. Col. Steven Bergosh, FIRES Squadron and 2SCR commander, presents a traditional Cavalry stetson to Lt. Col. Klaus Raab, commander of Panzer Engineer Battalion 4, during a partnership ceremony in Bogen, Germany.

“Opportunities for helpful exchange, to learn, and see, and act on the world from a new perspective.”

Following their remarks the commanders exchanged the traditional partnership gifts. Raab presented Bergosh with a crystal statue to commemorate the occasion. As is the cavalry tradition, Bergosh gave Raab a stetson and a set of gold spurs.

After the ceremony, troopers forged friendships with their German comrades by sharing a meal at the 4th Battalion Christmas market. Both German and U.S. Soldiers ate, talked, laughed and sang Christmas carols together while sharing some warm Bavarian delicacies.



Dragoon Soldiers carry the U.S. and Army flag alongside their German brothers-in-arms during the partnership ceremony between FIRES Squadron and the Panzer 4th Armored Engineer Battalion.

Spotlight on Education



Name: Connie Prautzsch

What grade and subject do you teach? Pre-kindergarten through 6th grade Math.

Hometown: Hill City, S.D.

How long have you been a teacher? 46 years.

What do you enjoy most about teaching? I enjoy working with the students who take responsibility for their learning.

What advice can you give students to help them succeed? Become interested in whatever you are studying. Go beyond memorizing information to understand it.

28 Dragoons compete in two-day event for title of ‘best fist’

by **Spc. JERRY WILSON**
2SCR Public Affairs

Fire Support Teams from the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment recently competed for the title of Best Fister. The Best Fist competition was held Dec. 7 and 8 at the Grafenwohr Training Area.

The competition was open to Soldiers serving in a company level Fire Support Officer role.

“It tests the skills of a standard Fire Support Team, their confidence level and physical ability,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Richard Emmendorfer, the event coordinator.

The competition had 28 participants overall broken down into five teams. The events were spread over a two-day period. During

those two days, each team completed a land navigation event to test their ability to move tactically over rugged terrain.

The central focus of the competition was a timed, 20 kilometer ruck march. Participants stopped at several stations along the route to include a medical evacuation lane. Teams were also required to call in artillery support from multiple locations to achieve certain missions which included fire for effect, adjust fire and immediate suppression.

Something new added to the competition was a walk and shoot lane. During the march Soldiers were given on chance to qualify with their M-4 at a designated range along the route.

Emmendorfer said that a typical Fist competition would include a written test to gauge the Soldiers knowledge of their job.

“We changed that around and made it into a Fire Support Board,” he said. “Every individual had the opportunity to appear before it.” Following the board each team was tested on commonly used in field equipment.

“Many of the skills in the competition mirror or parallel those tested during FIST certification,” Emmendorfer explained. “This is an opportunity for the team to establish where they stand and who is the best.”

In the end, the title of Best Fist Team went to 3rd Squadron. The team members were: 1st Lt. Lazarius Davidson, Staff Sgt. Ian Kriebel, Sgt. Arron Edwards, Sgt. Matthias Ellerbe, Sgt. Zack Benson, Spc. Chris McCloud and Pfc. Steve Dupont.

The best Fister overall award went to Sgt. Arron Edwards.

RETIREEE CORNER

Taxes and customs cards are among hot topics for retirees this new year

by **Retired Sgt. Maj. DAVE STEWART**
Garrison Retiree Council

Welcome to 2010, we hope it will be safe and healthy one for all of you. With the new year comes tax time. Specific issues surround retirees living in Germany as ordinary residents and many need special assistance from professional tax preparation experts.

Taxes

A tax treaty exists between the United States and Germany which treats income in different ways. For example, U.S. Social Security is reportable income on the form 1040, but not taxable under the treaty. This requires special treatment, however, and a professional familiar with the completion of this entry should be consulted to prevent paying taxes twice on the same income or an uninvited audit. Also, interest earned on German bank accounts, as well as investments are taxable and reportable items; again professional advice is recommended.

The Garrison Staff Judge Advocate can assist retirees and widows on preparing their U.S. tax returns. These are the some of the forms to bring for the session:

- Social Security Administration Form (s) SSA 1099-SM-F for benefits received in 2009

Statements of retired annuities received: 1099R, i.e.

military and if applicable civil service or NAF retirement tax statements.

- Interest, Dividend and Miscellaneous 1099 forms that are usually issued by banks for interest, dividend and withdrawal payments.

We will expand on tax information for this category of retirees in our next column in February. By this time retirees will have most of the statements they require for the SJA to assist one with in preparation.

AFN Services

AFN Bavaria recently placed its news and information service on its AFN AM signal. Since most retirees lived out of the FM reception zone, this was good news. This means that the reception radius has expanded significantly, bringing the latest garrison and national, international news to retirees.

Customs Cards

I had reports of confusion by DECA and retirees recently. The recent new customs agreements between EUCOM and the German Federal Tax Office may eventually result in the issuance of a new “pink card,” that may indeed be white.

The new cards require a monthly visit to the local customs office to receive a stamp even if no purchases were made. DECA checkout clerks will honor whatever statement is shown on the card which will either be one or two months of validity

depending on the age of the card.

Please remember that one is required to hand over their card to the check-out clerks to verify the validity.

International Deposits of Annuities

We have discovered that handwritten account numbers by German bank officials cause confusion with DFAS, VA and SSA official officials. This is because of the different ways of writing the numbers seven, four and one.

It is best to have the accounts entered by machine such as computer or typewriter. If handwritten, then ensure the numbers are recorded in the U.S. style to limit confusion that can delay the international deposit of your annuities. I will have more on this in a future column.

Berlin APO Privileges Revoked

The retirees in Berlin recently had their APO privileges revoked as the result of a U.S. State Department decision. Thanks to the garrison postal officials the Berliners were offered retired boxes at the APO in Grafenwoehr.

While Graf is still a significant distance from Berlin, our subgarrison has worked out ways for their staff to periodically pick up mail. This decision was very important for receiving Tricare medications.

Editor’s Note: Retired Sgt. Maj. Dave Stewart is the president of the Garrison Retiree Council.

Visible valuables make cars easy prey

by **ROBERT SZOSTEK**
USAREUR Office of the Provost Marshal

MANNHEIM, Germany - U.S. Army Europe personnel lose about four to five satellite navigation devices due to theft every week, USAREUR officials say.

“The main problems are that people leave their vehicles unlocked with GPS systems clearly visible,” said Lt. Col. Shawn J. Kelley, chief of law enforcement at the USAREUR Office of the Provost Marshal.

“It should be remembered that locking your vehicle is a requirement under German law. It is in the best interest of everybody to lock your vehicles and remove all removable valuable items like GPS when unattended,” he added. “Thieves will generally leave your car alone if it is locked and there is nothing worth stealing visible inside.”

Kelley also recommends individuals lock their cars on post and in housing areas, even if they leave it for only a short time.

“Also, never leave anything valuable in a car when it is unattended,” Kelley added.

If thieves see something valuable in plain sight inside a car, some will gladly smash a window or cut open a

canvas top to grab it, he warned.

He said the trunk is the safest place if you absolutely have to leave something in the car.

Detachable satellite navigation systems are the loot of choice for car thieves at the moment. Office of the Provost Marshal officials recommend that owners always take the devices, all accessories and data CDs with them when they leave their cars. Thieves know all the hiding places in a vehicle and will find the systems if they are left in a car.

German police also recommend removing detachable GPS holders from windshields, because thieves have been known to break into cars just because they see a holder in place.

Kelley also offered more advice to help people who will be driving around Europe this holiday season reduce their chances of becoming victims of crime:

- Never leave valuable documents such as passports or ID cards in your vehicle – those should always stay in your possession.

- Maps and guidebooks on the dashboard show mark a vehicle as belonging to a tourist. They should be kept in the glove box or out of sight.

- Keep away from cars driving erratically and never pick up hitchhikers.



Courtesy photo

Items visible in a vehicle make an easy target for theft, such as valuables and tourist-identifying maps.

- Always lock vehicles while driving, while getting gas at rest stops, and when parked.

Additional security tips are available from community Directorate of Emergency Services offices and the

National Crime Prevention Council Web site at www.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/theft.

Common sense a practical weapon for thwarting thieves

by **ROBERT SZOSTEK**
USAREUR Office of the Provost Marshal

MANNHEIM, Germany - The new year is usually a time for making resolutions. However, in addition to shaving off those extra pounds, Soldiers and family members should also resolve to become more vigilant against thieves and pickpockets.

Officials at the U.S. Army Europe Office of the Provost Marshal offer the following tips for preventing thefts during the new year:

Pickpockets

“Many USAREUR personnel fall victim to pickpockets every month,” said Lt. Col. Lon Walker, deputy USAREUR provost marshal. Most are targeted in bars and clubs, or in other crowded places such as on buses, in train stations, airports, stores or restaurants, he added.

To deter pickpockets, Walker recommends carrying purses in front of and close to the body rather than dangling by the straps, and zipped or snapped shut. Wallet should be carried in an inside coat or front pants pocket.

“Don’t leave valuables in your coat pocket if you hang it up or drape it over a chair at a restaurant,” he said.

In general, it is best to be aware of distractions such as strangers asking questions or someone offering to help move packages to get on a bus or train. Often these situations are a setup to allow an accomplice to pick a pocket, purse or backpack. Pickpockets are common on crowded buses and trains.

Home security

Walker also urged people to lock their doors and windows any time they leave their homes, apartment or barracks rooms, even for a short time. He also offered the following tips for people traveling:

- Don’t advertise that you will be away from your home or barracks room. Only give the information to people who need to know.

- Soldiers living in barracks should secure their personal belongings in a wall locker any time they leave their rooms.

- To make it easier for the military police to recover any stolen goods, take photos of your valuables and make a list of

all valuable items and their serial numbers.

More useful tips to keep the holidays safe and secure are available at the U.S. National Crime Prevention Council Web site at www.ncpc.org/cms/cms-upload/ncpc/files/holiday04.pdf.

The Army in Europe military police emergency number is DSN 114.



Courtesy photo

Citizens should guard against theft year-round.

Laptop stolen with personal information

*FMWR Public Affairs
Press Release*

A laptop computer containing names and personally identifiable information for slightly more than 42,000 Fort Belvoir Morale, Welfare and Recreation patrons was stolen from a Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command employee Nov. 28, 2009.

It was a forced entry to the employee’s residence and other high-value electronics and jewelry were stolen.

Local authorities are investigating what appears to be a random burglary, and military authorities are investigating whether proper security protocols were followed.

The Family and MWR Command was made aware of the theft Dec. 1,

and began assessing the extent of the security breach and preparing to notify affected customers. Letters were sent to all affected patrons explaining the nature of the breach.

Officials at FMWRC apologize for any inconvenience this may cause their patrons. As a command, FMWRC takes the security and integrity of patron information very seriously, and is currently reviewing policies to determine how to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Information security experts believe it is unlikely the information on the computer will be compromised. Anyone attempting access to the data on the computer would have to bypass three layers of security access and encryption passwords.

It’s far more likely the hard drive will

be removed, discarded and replaced, according to the risk assessment.

The Family and MWR Command operates numerous facilities on Fort Belvoir, including child care centers, bowling centers, restaurants, outdoor recreation facilities and golf courses. Soldiers, family members, Department of Defense employees and other authorized MWR patrons who used an MWR facility on Fort Belvoir since 2005 may be included in the data on the laptop.

Patrons who have used a Fort Belvoir MWR facility since 2005 but have not received official notification from the Family and MWR Command are encouraged to call 866-276-9697 from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST) weekdays to determine if they were included in the database, and learn how to guard against misuse of the information.

COURT MARTIAL RESULTS

The following courts-martial were reported by the Joint Multinational Training Command Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

- At a Special Court-Martial convened in Vilseck, Germany, Nov. 9, 2009, Spc. David Entrich, 5th Maintenance Co (Rear) (Provisional), 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Grafenwoehr, Germany, plead guilty to three specifications of Article 86, absence without leave, two of which were terminated by apprehension. The military judge found that Entrich’s pleas were provident. At sentencing, the prosecution argued Entrich abandoned his unit three times, twice while it was preparing for deployment, and was only present at the court-martial because he was apprehended by law enforcement authorities.

Entrich was sentenced to be confined for six months, to be reduced to the grade of E-1, and to be discharged with a bad conduct discharge.

- At a Special Court-Martial convened in Vilseck, Germany, Nov. 10, 2009, Master Sgt. Ronnie Shakir, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, U.S. Army Medical Activity Bavaria, Vilseck, Germany, plead guilty to three specifications of Article 107, false official statement, and one specification of Article 134, wearing unauthorized insignia, decoration, badge, ribbon, device or lapel button. The military judge found that Shakir’s pleas were provident.

Shakir was sentenced to be confined for 45 days, to be reduced to the grade of E-7, to be reprimanded, and to forfeit \$500 pay per month for six months.

- At a General Court-Martial convened in Vilseck, Germany, Nov. 19, 2009, Spc. David Chase, 527th Military Police Company, Hohenfels, Germany, plead guilty to one specification of attempted premeditated murder, five specifications of assault on a person performing law enforcement duties, one specification of assault of a commissioned officer, and one specification of assault consummated by a battery. The military judge found that Chase’s pleas were provident.

Chase was sentenced to be confined for 25 years, to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, and to be discharged with a

dishonorable discharge.

- At a General Court-Martial convened in Vilseck, Germany, Dec. 8, 2009, Pfc. Victor Kinderknecht, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Joint Multinational Readiness Command, Hohenfels, Germany, plead guilty to one specification of Article 134, possession of child pornography. The military judge found that Kinderknecht’s pleas were provident.

Kinderknecht was sentenced to be confined for six months, to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, and to be discharged with a bad conduct discharge.

- Four Summary Courts-Martial were convened by the Fires Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment in Vilseck, Germany, Dec. 11, 2009. All four Summary Courts-Martial involved the wrongful use or possession of controlled substances in violation of Article 112a or Article 134. Spc. Jonathan Campbell plead guilty to wrongful use of cocaine. Campbell was sentenced to be confined for 30 days and to be reduced to E-1. Pvt. (E-2) William Griffie plead guilty to wrongful use of spice. Griffie was sentenced to be confined for seven days, to forfeit two-thirds pay for one month, and to be reduced to E-1. Pvt. (E-2) Darrion Milton plead guilty to wrongful possession of marijuana. Milton was sentenced to be confined for 21 days, to forfeit two-thirds pay for one month, and to be reduced to E-1.

Pvt. (E-2) George Archer plead guilty to wrongful use of marijuana. Archer was sentenced to be confined for 21 days, to forfeit two-thirds pay for one month, and to be reduced to E-1.

- At a General Court-Martial convened Dec. 11, 2009, in Mannheim, Germany, and tried by military judge alone, Spc. Ricci J. Angel, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 173rd Special Troops Battalion, Bamberg, Germany, was found guilty of a violation of Article 134, for knowingly and wrongfully possessing child pornography. He was charged with possessing 272 images and 25 videos.

Angel was sentenced to be confined for five years, to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to forfeit all pay and allowances, and to a dishonorable discharge.

M/S tires permitted, but not ticket-proof

Story and photos by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

As snow continues to fall with no expectations of spring in the near future, hazardous road conditions remain and drivers are charged with making sure their vehicles are equipped for the weather, especially with suitable winter tires.

However, with two sets of guidelines to sort through, deciding between winter and all-season tires may seem confusing to some.

When making that decision, drivers have two things to consider: Army regulations and German law, though neither one mandates one type of tire over the other.

According to AER 190-1, the U.S. Army Europe document detailing requirements for personally owned vehicles, “in high-snow areas, vehicles must have snow tires mounted. In areas not regarded as ‘snow prone,’ the use of all-season tires with an M/S label or a snowflake label are acceptable. Vehicle owners should check with an authorized tire dealer for any unique restrictions in their area. Winter tires should have a tread depth of at least three millimeters.”

Though snow can be expected in the Hohenfels area from October until at least the end of March, all-season M/S (mud and snow) tires are still considered acceptable, according to the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Provost Marshal’s Office, which uses all-season

M/S tires on military police vehicles. Most lightweight TMP vehicles also have all-season M/S tires, according to George Braun, TMP transportation supervisor.

To make matters even more confusing, there are some American tires that say “All Season” but do not have the M/S designation. These are considered unacceptable for winter driving by both Army regulation and German law, said Keith Dreibelbis, Car Care Center manager.

Though all-season M/S tires are permitted, winter tires still out perform all-season M/S tires in especially cold, snowy or icy conditions, according to the Police Inspectorate in Parsberg.

A letter addressed to the Hohenfels Provost Marshal’s Office from the Police Inspectorate in Parsberg reminded drivers of the need for proper tires in inclement weather and pointed out the advantages of winter tires.

“Modern winter tires already guarantee a significantly better traction at temperatures of seven degree Celsius (44 degrees Fahrenheit)

or below, even on dry road surfaces. On snow/ice-covered roads the winter tires outclass regular tires by far,” said the letter signed by Peter Gotteswinter, chief of the Police Inspectorate in Parsberg.

“However, the law does not dictate the use of winter tires,” said the letter. “The German Road Traffic Ordinance says: ‘The equipment of a motor vehicle has to be adjusted to the weather/road conditions. This in particular includes proper tires and antifreeze fluid for windshield wipers.’”

Though neither Army regulation nor German law mandate the use of winter tires, users of all-season M/S tires are not completely immune from receiving a ticket for not using them, said Maj. Michael Zink, garrison provost marshal.

The letter from the Parsberg police goes on to say that when wintry road conditions prevail, if improper tires (i.e. summer tires or worn winter tires) are being used and the driver exhibits poor driving skills such as spinning, fishtailing, skidding and loss of traction, a violation of the

legal requirement to equip the vehicle with proper winter gear can be punished by fines ranging from 20 to 60 euros, and insurance companies may impose their own penalties if improper tires were found to be the cause of the accident.

The bottom line is: while all season M/S tires are considered acceptable by both Army and German regulations, if you are in an accident off-post and you have all season M/S tires, the other driver has snow tires and it seems road conditions were the prevailing factor in the accident, you might get a ticket, said Zink.

Thomas Niebler, on-post POV inspector, agreed that winter tires are the ideal option.

“All-season (with M/S) tires are allowed, but the safest option is summer (tires) for summer and winter for winter. All-seasons are not really either,” said Niebler, adding that drivers of SUVs should especially consider winter tires because the heavier the vehicle, the more traction it needs.

“A lot of people with four-wheel drive think they don’t need winter tires, but they especially do. The difference is the rubber mix. If the temperature is lower than seven degrees (Celsius, 44 degrees Fahrenheit) the tire gets hard and starts losing grip,” said Niebler.

Niebler also said winter drivers should ensure they have the always-mandatory first aid kit and warning triangles in their car, as well as snow chains and a warning vest if driving in Austria.

“All-season (with M/S) tires are allowed, but the safest option is summer (tires) for summer and winter for winter. All-seasons are not really either.”

Thomas Niebler
USAG Hohenfels vehicle inspector



This winter tire, marked with a snowflake, has treads and a rubber mix that help it grip cold roads better than all-season or summer tires.



This all-season tire is considered acceptable for winter driving because it has an M/S designation on the side, but winter tires have better treads, better rubber and are still superior on cold, snowy roads. While all season M/S tires are allowed, they still might not protect a driver from getting a ticket for not having “proper winter tires.” All season tires without an M/S or a snowflake are not acceptable for winter driving.



This summer tire has less tread and harder rubber than an all season M/S or winter tire. Summer tires are considered unacceptable for winter driving by both Army regulations and German law.

Conference with a record for results to return in February

by **KRISTIN BRADLEY**
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

Community members at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels will soon have their yearly chance to tell Army leadership their suggestions for quality of life improvements when Army Community Service hosts Hohenfels’ Army Family Action Plan conference, Feb. 17-19.

A delegate presents her working group’s issue recommendations to Army Family Action Plan conference attendees. From a drive-through ATM at Hohenfels to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, issues submitted by community members through AFAP have resulted in concrete improvements at all levels of the military.

Photo by Garry Barrows

Now through Feb. 12 ACS will be accepting AFAP issue forms that allow community members to identify a problem or concern, state why it is a problem, and offer two suggestions to fix it.

During the conference, volunteer delegates will discuss every one of those issues and consult with subject matter experts before forming their final recommendation for the garrison

commander.

If a solution is outside the scope of the garrison, Hohenfels can submit issues for the IMCOM-Europe AFAP conference. Issues from the IMCOM level may also be submitted for discussion at the Department of the Army conference.

This process, established by the Army in 1983, has effected visible changes at Hohenfels, according to

Kurt Rager, ACS outreach coordinator and this year’s AFAP coordinator.

Rager said some of the most notable include the planned drive-through ATM in front of Building 9 and new lighting along the stretch of Gen. Patton Road near the high school.

According to AFAP documentation, one of the top five overall issues from the 2008 conference was the need for a drive-through ATM. That same year, another issue suggested that Military Clothing Sales be moved from Albertshof to main post.

Now Building 9 is under renovation and when complete Clothing Sales and other services including dry cleaning, car rental, the Pextra and more will relocate there to centralize most post services along one stretch of Gen. Patton Road. A drive-through ATM is under construction at the same location.

Also in 2008, an issue was submitted raising concern about the safety of students who walk from the Hohenfels Middle/High School toward the PX after school. Because darkness falls early in the day during most of the school year, the issue suggested safety could be increased by installing lighting along that strip of Gen. Patton Road. The AFAP working group assigned to the issue agreed and recommended that lights be added. The lighting has now been installed.

Those examples are just two of many, said Rager, and successes range from small issues to large ones.

“It can be small, little things, policy changes, or something big,” said Rager.

According to Army One Source, Family Readiness Groups as a unit requirement, Family Readiness Support Assistants, Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers and even the Post-9/11 GI Bill resulted from AFAP issues.

“If you have a problem, this is one way to get it fixed,” said Rager, “but think of it as quality of life. As you think of things that would improve the quality of life for you and others, this is a place where you can go and you will be listened to.”

To submit an issue, community members can download a form from the garrison Web site at www.hohenfels.army.mil or pick up a paper copy at ACS, Building 10. According to ACS, paper forms and drop boxes should be available soon at locations throughout post.

Rager said volunteers are still needed to serve as delegates, facilitators, recorders, transcribers and conference support staff. The AFAP Conference begins at 8 a.m. each morning; lunch and child care are provided. Those interested in volunteering may call Kurt Rager at DSN 466-3403, CIV 09472-83-3403 or e-mail kurt.rager@eur.army.mil.



Community talks with garrison leaders

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

Community members asked questions of U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels officials during the garrison's quarterly town hall meeting, Jan. 6, on topics ranging from what constitutes a "no show" at the health clinic, to road conditions, single Soldier barracks and more.

To start the meeting, officials each had one minute to speak during which they briefed community members on upcoming events and other pertinent information.

Maj. Michael Zink, provost marshal, said there were 317 traffic accidents at Hohenfels in 2009, nearly twice the rate of other like-sized garrisons.

Of those accidents, 16 were caused by a driver under the influence of alcohol or otherwise impaired. John Cavanaugh, director of plans, training, mobilization and security, said the emergency taxi ride home service continues to provide taxi fare for impaired drivers who find themselves without money or a ride home.

"This is a no brainer. There should not be any DUIs on an installation with a program like this," said Cavanaugh.

In another transportation-related issue, Ed Jones, director of logistics, said the on-post shuttle bus is currently utilized by only 27 percent of possible riders. His goal, he said, is to increase that number to 50 percent.

"It's a great service and one we want to provide. Ridership drives effectiveness. If we have the ridership we can do it, but we cannot afford to have the bus run back and forth empty," said Jones.

Lt. Col. Derek Cooper, U.S. Army Health Clinic Hohenfels commander, also called for community action, urging patients to register on www.tricareonline.com so they can make appointments through the Web site, thus cutting phone traffic on the clinic's overloaded phone system.

Cooper also said the clinic receives \$100 for every completed patient survey, though typically patients only return



Sgt. 1st Class Krista Brooks asks the command team a question during the open floor portion of the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels town hall meeting. All community members are invited to the quarterly meeting and encouraged to ask questions of garrison staff about anything pertaining to life at USAG Hohenfels.

them 3 percent of the time.

"That's a lot of money to be had if I can just get folks to fill these out," said Cooper.

The clinic also receives funding based on the number of patients who are up-to-date with their wellness screenings, another area where Cooper said he needs patients' help. Wellness nurses contact patients due for a screening, though ultimately it is up to the patient to come in for the appointment.

A short walk from the clinic, community members will soon see big changes at Building 9, next to the PX.

Jim Einwaechter, Department of Public Works director, said construction work on the building is almost complete and soon AAFES will be able to relocate the PXtra, Military Clothing Sales Store, car rental, dry cleaning, and the Bookmark (currently inside the PX) to that one location. A drive-through ATM from Service Credit Union is also

For a full list of questions and answers from the garrison town hall meeting, visit the garrison Web site at www.hohenfels.army.mil.

currently being constructed in front of the building.

After the briefings the emphasis shifted to the open forum portion of the meeting when the audience was invited to ask questions of the garrison commander or any other member of the garrison staff.

One community member asked Cooper what is considered a "no show" for an appointment: the actual appointment time, or 15 minutes prior when patients are instructed to arrive.

Cooper said a patient is considered a no show if they are not present by the actual appointment time, though primary care managers may take patients who arrive a few minutes late if time permits.

Rebecca Spencer, Hohenfels PX manager, in response to a question about Bookmark inventory, said inventory will remain roughly the same after the Bookmark relocates from the PX to Building 9. Moving the books out of the PX will create more floor space for additional PX inventory, Spencer said.

Marla Smith, AAFES Grafenwoehr general manager, said customers are always welcome to use the AAFES shuttle service to have items sent to Hohenfels from other AAFES locations, usually Grafenwoehr. When another community member expressed concern that AAFES employees in Grafenwoehr are not aware of the program, Smith said any customers having trouble using the service should contact Spencer directly.

"We have somebody (from Grafenwoehr) coming to Hohenfels every week. If there's something in the PX that your PX doesn't carry, that's different from a furniture delivery (furniture is delivered for a fee), we can

bring that. If you're having problems, let Rebecca know and she'll contact me directly," said Smith.

Though some questions were answered with relatively easy and simple responses, not all issues were solved as quickly.

Responding to a question about how often road conditions are updated, Lt. Col. Kevin Quarles, garrison commander, said that each morning military police visit the five known worst spots in the area surrounding post to assess the roads using a detailed checklist. If, according to the parameters of the checklist, conditions at any of the five spots are considered red or black, Quarles is alerted to determine if the situation warrants a work delay or closure of post. In conjunction with schools, that determination must be made to allow two hour notification for buses and parents, he said.

Quarles said though there have been some issues with the system recently, he considers road safety a top priority and promised to identify and repair any problems with the notification system.

After the discussion about road conditions, Einwaechter addressed another issue that affects a large segment of the community: single Soldier barracks.

"Obviously in terms of barracks facilities, specifically here at Hohenfels, we've got relatively good, relatively bad and relatively ugly facilities," said Einwaechter. He also spoke about specific buildings on post, acknowledging that many need serious improvement. He said Building 386, which has been completely renovated and is scheduled for an official ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 22, is an example of what DPW would like to do for many barracks on post, but it lacks the funds to do so.

"We don't have the resources to keep up with the rate at which buildings are failing," said Einwaechter. "We need to replace them, and we need to replace them badly with modern, Army-standard 1+1 facilities . . . I wish I could be more encouraging about getting brand new facilities, but it is going to take some time."

Dental town hall tackles family dental benefits

by **KRISTIN BRADLEY**
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

Col. Theresa Gonzales, Bavaria Dental Command, held a dental town hall meeting at U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels during which she spoke about the Army dental corps mission and how it affects both Soldiers and family members stationed in Germany.

Dr. David Corman, assistant director of the Tricare Dental Program, Europe, also spoke at the Jan. 6 meeting about additional benefits Tricare provides for family members living overseas.

Gonzales began by explaining that because the dental corps' primary mission is to treat 100 percent of Soldiers, family members are only seen on a space-available basis.

"We must maintain the wellness of our force while they are in garrison so they will not have to be treated while deployed," said Gonzales. She said having to treat Soldiers downrange not only affects unit readiness, but also could put the Soldier in unnecessary danger while deployed.

"Whenever we make a decision to put a troop in a convoy for dental care in Balad, or wherever we are, we make huge a decision to increase the risk to that troop. So we try not to do that," said Gonzales. "We use the resources we have here and try very hard not to deploy anyone with a need for dental care." In addition, a high operations tempo means Soldiers may not be in garrison for very long, so they need to have priority over family members.

In Germany, just as in the United States, family members are therefore referred to dentists off post.

Corman said family members receive excellent dental care in Germany, both because German dentists have very high standards (according to Gonzales, Germany is one of the few countries whose dental training program is longer than in the United States), and because

Tricare benefits for family members living in Europe are greater than in the United States.

For example, Tricare pays about 60 percent of the cost for a root canal in the United States but usually pays 100 percent of the cost in Germany, Corman said, citing many more examples of increased Tricare benefits overseas.

"The important thing to know is that the government values you as family members, and is paying to give you an added benefit," said Corman.

To receive dental benefits, family members must be enrolled in the dental program through their sponsor, though if they were enrolled in the U.S. they do not need to re-enroll overseas.

Corman also said that there are six preferred providers in the Hohenfels area. Preferred providers, he said, have promised to help family members with their Tricare claim so they do not have to pay at the time of service.

"You might then ask, why do we provide care for family members at all?" said Gonzales, switching topics to discuss the 30 percent of appointments that are given to family members in Europe.

As troops move in and out of garrison, there are often times when resources not being used for Soldiers can be offered to family members, she said. Of those appointments, most of them are for pediatric and orthodontic care for adolescents and children, because in rural Germany, just as in rural America, those specialties tend to be less accessible than others, said Gonzales.

Because it is crucial that Soldiers are taken care of and because ever-fluctuating troop movements mean the availability of family member care also fluctuates, Gonzales said it is critical that family members maintain "absolute fidelity" in keeping their appointments.

"We're interested in responsible stewardship of the resources we have for dentistry," said Gonzales.



Photo by Christina Wilson

Instrumental accompaniment

Commanders from U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, and the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, along with mayors from local German communities, give the United States Army Europe Band and Soldiers' Chorus some instrumental help during a performance at USAG Hohenfels.

The Band and the Soldiers' Chorus, currently the Army's third largest musical organization, the biggest outside of the United States and the Army's premier musical ambassadors in Europe, performed a free holiday concert for the Hohenfels community, Dec. 17.

What's Happening

Grafenwoehr/ Vilseck Briefs

Community Huddle

The Community Huddle, Jan. 28, is a new monthly meeting for all community members that combines previous meetings (town hall, Senior Spouses Roundtable). Hosted by Col. Chris Sorenson, USAG Grafenwoehr commander, the first Community Huddle will be held 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Tower View Restaurant, Main Post, Bldg. 209.

It's an opportunity for you to find out the latest info on programs, events, construction updates, and other important issues.

Garrison directors and subject matter experts will brief topics and answer questions. Mark your calendars and join us -- you can make a difference in your community.

Single women's event

Sunday, Jan. 31, the single women will enjoy the arts by attending the Romeo & Juliet Ballet, performed at the Nuremburg Opera House.

The show begins at 7 p.m. Ticket prices range from 8-42.50 euros, depending on which seats you choose.

To sign up and reserve your seat, contact Laurel Hoyt no later than Jan. 21 at laurel.hoyt@cadence.org or CIV 0151-14991395.

Jewish Resource Group

Our next Jewish Learning and Resource Group Bavaria class will be Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 7 p.m., in Bldg. 555, Grafenwoehr.

Rabbi Chitrik of Nuremberg will be coming to give the class and refreshments will be served. This is a great opportunity for Jewish personnel and their families to meet.

E-mail jrlgbavaria@googlemail.com.

Win a 5-night vacation

IMCOM-Europe Postal Transformation Office is launching an Online-Survey to provide valued customer service to our postal customers in Europe.

This survey, at www.milmail.org, will give you a voice to weigh in on important issues directly impacting you such as postal operating hours, Saturday operations and e-mail notification of packages.

Only authorized postal customers may participate. This includes Soldiers, U.S. retirees, civilian employees, contractors and their family members who have an authorized APO address.

As a thank you for taking a few moments to complete our survey, we would like to offer you a chance to win a five night stay at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort.

The prize is valid for one standard room (double occupancy) for a five-night consecutive stay. It is not valid during federal holiday weekends and must be used before May 31, 2011.

There is no cash value associated with this prize and cannot be redeemed for cash. Prize package is nontransferable and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Black-out dates apply.

It will only take a few minutes to complete and will run until Feb. 15.

Winter weather watch

Stay informed on winter road conditions. MPs will monitor road conditions and the command will make winter safety decisions.

We will keep the community informed through AFN radio (98.5 FM or 1107 AM), the crawler on the command information channel, and our automated weather hot line available at DSN 475-7623 or CIV 09641-83-7623.

Celebrating diversity

Know someone in the JMTC community whose diverse talents and experiences make this a great place to live, work and train?

Nominate them to be a 2010 Excellence through Diversity Representative. Monthly selectees will share their stories and represent the command on AFN TV and radio, in the *Bavarian News* and JMTC promotional materials. For more, visit www.hqjmtc.army.mil.

Officer Candidate Board

Enhance your career, gain greater responsibility and make more money.

Enlisted Soldiers of 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command and tenant commands interested in participating in an OCS selection board, Feb. 4, 8 a.m., at the Grafenwoehr Water Tower, 2nd floor Conference Room are encouraged to submit an OCS selection packet to the JMTC G1 by Jan. 28.

For more, contact Sgt. Auguste Lee, DSN 475-7095, CIV 09641-83-7095.

Hohenfels Briefs

Half-day snowshoe hike

Take a three-hour hike of the Bavarian Forest near the Dreissesselberg, Jan. 23.

Bus will depart from Hohenfels Outdoor Recreation at 10 a.m. and will return at 6 p.m.

Cost is \$70 per person and includes transportation, equipment and tour. Seating is limited to the first 14 customers. For more, call DSN 466-2060.

Ingolstadt Village shopping

The Ingolstadt Village outlet has more than 100 stores including Calvin Klein, Fossil and Tommy Hilfiger.

Bus will depart from Hohenfels Outdoor Recreation at 8 a.m., Jan. 30, and will return at 9:30 p.m. Cost is \$40 per person. Seating is limited to the first 50 people.

For more, call DSN 466-2060.

Ski trip to Reit im Winkl

A one-day trip offering alpine and cross country skiing, hiking and more. Bus will depart from Hohenfels Outdoor Recreation at 5:30 a.m., Jan. 30, and will return at 8:30 p.m.

Cost is \$25 for adults and \$20 for children 12 and under. Discounts offered to groups of five or more and for those with season rentals.

Seating is limited to the first 14 customers.

For more information call DSN 466-2060.

Bunco

The Hohenfels community is invited to enjoy themselves in a game of Bunco, Feb. 5. Registration fee is \$10 which includes a light buffet.

Doors will open at the Zone at 5:30 p.m. and the games will be held from 6:30 p.m. to midnight.

For more, call DSN 466-2060.

Volunteer of the Quarter

The contributions of volunteers to every unit or organization can be overlooked or taken for granted. Volunteer of the Quarter nominations are a great opportunity to generate public awareness and show appreciation. Anyone aware of valuable volunteer service may nominate the provider on a brief nomination form available at ACS, Bldg. 10.

The winner will be announced in the Hometown Happenings news letter, receive a special reserved parking spot at the Commissary and PX and additional recognition.

Don't wait to acknowledge volunteer contributions in your work area. The nomination deadline is Jan. 23.

For more, call Pam Koch at DSN 466-4860.

Volunteer recognition

Every year, USAG Hohenfels is eager to recognize the tremendous contribution of volunteers to the efficient function of the post.

If you have volunteered within the past year, go to www.myArmyOneSource.com to make certain your volunteer record is up to date with the correct contact information and total number of hours for 2009.

All volunteer records need to be updated by Jan. 30 to ensure that each volunteer is recognized and to capture the total impact of the combined efforts for USAG Hohenfels.

For more, call the Army Community Service at DSN 466-4860.

AFAP volunteers needed

Members of the Hohenfels community are needed as volunteers for the upcoming 2010 Army Family Action Plan Conference, AFAP, at USAG Hohenfels. The AFAP Conference will be held from Feb. 17-19.

Volunteers are needed to serve as delegates, facilitators, recorders, transcribers, and conference support staff.

The AFAP Conference begins at 8 a.m. each morning. Lunch and child care are provided.

If you are interested in volunteering call Kurt Rager at DSN 466-3403 or e-mail kurt.rager@eur.army.mil by Feb. 5.

Issues welcome for AFAP

Army Family Action Plan, AFAP, is your route to have issues, concerns and problems addressed by Army leadership for change and resolution.

Now is the time to submit issues for the upcoming USAG Hohenfels AFAP Conference.

If you are aware of a problem or quality of life issue here at Hohenfels, regardless of the size or importance, submit it now through Feb. 12.

Whether the problem is to improve local programs and services or to amend or change local or Army policies and regulations, submit it.

Paper issue forms are currently available at ACS, Bldg. 10 and online at www.hohenfels.army.mil.

Issue forms will be available soon at various locations on post.

For more information or if you would like an issue form sent to you call Kurt Rager at DSN 466-4860.

Sweetheart's Night Out

Start planning a date night for your Valentine. Take advantage of the extended care offered by CYS from 6-11 p.m., Feb. 13.

The cost is \$20 for CDC children and \$15 for SAS age children. Register at CLEOS, located in Bldg. 10. AFC benefits apply. For more, call DSN 466-2078.

The Eclectic Book Club

The Eclectic Book Club, for men and women ages 18 and older, meets on the last Monday of each month from 5-6 p.m. This month's meeting will be Jan. 25. The December/January book is Anna Karenina by Tolstoy. For more, call DSN 466-1740.

Furry friends tea party

A tea party and story-time for children of all ages will be held Jan. 27 from 3-4:30 p.m. at the Turnbull Memorial Library. For more, call DSN 466-1740.

Food handler's class

A food handler's classes will be offered Jan. 28 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Yellow Ribbon Room in Bldg. 10. Classes are limited to 30 people. Classes will be held on Jan. 28, Feb. 25 and March 25. To reserve your seat in advance call Sgt. Tommay Lockridge or Staff Sgt. Andre Moxley at DSN 476-2041/2138.

Cold weather campout

Boy Scout Troop 303's first of two cold weather campouts this year will be in Velburg, Jan. 22-23. Activities include setting up a snow camp, cooking over an open fire and trying to stay warm. Boy Scouts is open to all boys ages 11-17. For more information on joining Troop 303, contact Lt. Col. Yancy Wood, scoutmaster, at DSN 466-4901 or e-mail Yancy.wood@eur.army.mil.

Kontakt Club Hohenfels

The Kontakt Club is a German-American friendship organization, sponsored by the U.S. Army that includes Soldiers, families, and other Americans supporting USAG Hohenfels, and German citizens from the surrounding communities. The Hohenfels community is invited to participate in the Club's upcoming activities. For directions to the events, call the Public Affairs Office at DSN 466-2457, or visit the club's Web site at www.kontaktclub-hohenfels.org.

Jan. 20: Monthly club Stammtisch, or regular dinner, will be held at 7 p.m. at Josef's Taverne in the village of Hohenfels. This is a great event for those

curious about the club to attend. If you need directions call Kurt Rager at DSN 466-3403.

Feb. 3: Monthly bowling night at Lane 17 from 7-9 p.m. All are welcome.

Feb. 14: The club will attend and participate in Velburg's Fasching parade. Meeting time will be at 2 p.m. More information will be provided.

Garmisch Briefs

Madame Butterfly – Jan. 22

Come see one of the most popular operas of all time at the famous Munich Opera House.

Ticket prices range from €9-100 and are always available before the show.

The FMWR bus cost is \$12, a great deal for opera goers or those just wanting to spend the evening in Munich.

Water Works - Jan. 23

If you thought, the "Water Works" is only a semidesirable property in Monopoly you might be wondering how it works. Trust us! Water does work!

Water can be extremely therapeutic, relaxing, calming, exhilarating and lots of good fun at the Erdinger Therme.

Costs: \$15 transportation, €32-34 entrance fee, plus extra for food and drink.

Neuschwanstein Castle

On Jan. 24, visit the most popular tourist attraction in Germany, Neuschwanstein Castle, and the castle town of Fussen, the Wieskirche, and Ettal Monastery.

Meet at the Pete Burke Center at 8 a.m. Cost: \$39.

Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony

Don't miss this, Jan. 26. Symphony tickets range in price from €5-53, and the cost of the FMWR bus is \$12.

Come for the concert, catch a movie, or just enjoy the ambiance of Munich.

Weekend in Venice

View great art and architecture, pigeons in St. Mark's Square and gondolas, Jan. 29-31.

In addition, we tour Verona, the Romeo and Juliet city with the great Roman Arena – and a wonderful restaurant. Cost: \$290, plus €120-140 to cover museum entrances, food and public transportation.

Carnivale in Venice

Experience the pageantry and grandeur of Carnivale in Venice, Feb. 5-7.

View great art and architecture, the pigeons in St. Mark's Square, gondolas, good places to eat, and more.

Cost: \$290.

USAG Grafenwoehr Libraries celebrate

National Homemade Soup Day

Come out to your local library on
Souper Thursday, Feb. 4th
for a Homemade Soup Class!



Rose Barracks Library
10 a.m.

Main Post Library
2 p.m.



For more information contact DSN: 475/476-1740
or CIV: 09662/09641-83-1740

The Zone Sports Bar and BOSS will host the third annual Super Bowl. Join us for the pre-game festivities, snacks, trivia, prizes and more and then watch the game on the big screen.



Super Bowl 2010 will be played in the city of Miami, Florida at the Dolphins Stadium. This will be the 10th time the Super Bowl has been played there. The stadium can seat 75,540 fans.

Here is some history trivia - Surprisingly, given the importance of the game, Super Bowl history is rather brief: the first Super Bowl championship was held in 1967. Bowl games are nothing new in football, but the Super Bowl elevated the practice to an American sports tradition. It all started as a way for the champions of the two pigskin leagues of the time, the National Football League (NFL) and the American Football League (AFL), to determine who really was Number One. Super Bowl I, which capped off the 1966 season, took place on January 15, 1967 at Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Almost 62,000 fans were in the stadium to see Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers teach the Kansas City Chiefs a painful lesson about who was boss, to the tune of 35-10. Millions more watched the super colt new bowl game on TV, and thus a new football tradition was born.

**The Zone Sports Bar
Rose Barracks, 6 p.m.**

February 7

**2010
SUPER BOWL**

For more information contact the Langenbruck Center at DSN 476-2360.

What’s Happening

Garmisch (continued)

Prague theme tour

This will be a small group — no more than 16 counting two FMRW tour guides, Feb. 12-15.

Attend an opera, visit area museums, or explore the rest of Prague – as a group or on your own. Assistance for those who want opera tickets is available.

This is going to be a great weekend because of the unique performances and exhibitions. Cost: \$290.

Munich & Third Reich

Join us Feb. 26 & 28. Start with a video presentation and a geographical and historical orientation in the Pete Burke Community Center on Friday evening, Jan. 8 at 7 p.m.

On Sunday, Jan. 10, we meet at the Garmisch train station just before 8 a.m. to travel to Munich, recount the Bier Hall Putsch as it happened in 1923, have lunch and visit the site of the Munich Accords. Cost: \$35.

Pool & Gorge – Feb. 27

Visit the Partnachklamm, one of the most beautiful natural attractions in Germany. Hear about the 1936 Olympics in Garmisch at the ski jumping stadium, and then finish the day at the Al্পspitze Wellenbad, the town’s largest swimming pool. Cost: \$22.

For more info on any of these FMRW trips, contact the Garmisch Outdoor Recreation Alpine Experts at DSN 440-2638 or CIV 08821-750-2638.

Ansbach Briefs

New SKIES Unlimeted classes

The new catalog has information on upcoming classes for kids and youth. Included are Acting and Film, Culinary Arts, Dance, Lifeguard & Jr. Lifeguard, and a variety of Music Classes. Up to 8 SKIES classes are free per child for families of deployed Soldiers! To learn more about classes, stop by Central Enrollment & Registration Office: Storck Bks (across from Community Bank) or call DSN 467-4880, CIV 09841-83-4880, Katterbach (inside CMR Building) DSN 467-2533, CIV 09802-83-2533.

Go Hunting

Obtain a German hunting license while stationed in Germany. A 60-hour

course is offered to U.S. ID card holders 18 or older. Learn game and land management, game disease and harvest plans. Earn the right to hunt and own firearms.

Classes are scheduled every Tuesday and Thursday. The first class begins at 6 p.m., Jan. 12 at the Katterbach Outdoor Recreation Center. All other classes will be held in the Area Support Team’s conference room on Storck Barracks (Bldg. 6507). The cost is \$150 per person. Additional fees are charged for the shooting range and ammunition. Some Saturday training will be required for range qualification and land management. Pre-registration is required before Jan. 8.

For more, call DSN 467-3225, CIV 0902-83-3225.

Playhouse events

The Terrace Playhouse has temporarily relocated to Barton Barracks, Bldg. 5284 (the former Barton dining facility). Auditions for the pop musical “Why Do Fools Fall in Love” and the drama “Wit” are Jan. 13-14, at 7 p.m. - no experience required.

For more or to reserve tickets, call DSN 468-7636, CIV 0981-183-7636.

Gift giving just got easier

Americans can now give gifts to the Army. The “Gifts to Army” web site provides the American public with information on methods by which citizens, organizations, and corporations can contribute cash or goods and services to benefit Soldiers and their families.

Cash contributions up to \$10,000 can be made online via credit card for the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs supporting Soldiers and their families or directly to a specific Army installation.

FMWR programs process general unsolicited contributions in the form of goods, services or money for use in its programs which include, but are not limited to: Child care centers, youth activities, recreation centers, libraries, sports programs and much more. One hundred percent of all contributions are used to benefit Soldiers and their families and no part of a contribution is used to offset administration expenses.

To make an online contribution, visit <http://giftstoarmy.army.mil/index.aspx>.

The garrison’s program coordinator can answer questions regarding contributions of money or goods and services or provide assistance with making a contribution at DSN 468-7231, CIV 0981-83-7231.

Learn to snowboard & ski

Looking for a quick getaway? Hop on the Bamberg ODR trip to Austria’s

beautiful Gastein Valley Jan. 30-31 . Trip cost of \$149 includes transportation and lodging (double occupancy) with dinner and breakfast. Snowboard lessons will be available for \$25 for 1.5 hours. Get reduced rentals or get your own gear tuned for half price at ODR. Transportation departs ODR Jan. 30 at 2 a.m. and returns Jan. 31 at 10 a.m.

Food handling classes

Food handlers classes will be offered Jan. 14, Feb. 11 and March 11 from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the ACS classroom in building 5817 in Katterbach. Classes are limited to 30 people so reserve your seat in advance by calling DSN 476-2041 or 2138.

New education center hours

Soldiers separating from the Army are required to make an appointment on a Tuesday or Thursday to out-process. Separating Soldiers must know their separation program designator, or SPD, code which is obtained from the Transition Center, in order to be cleared through the Education Center. Army Education Centers in Ansbach, Bamberg and Schweinfurt will provide limited counseling and testing services by appointment only: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Testing services will be available only on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week with testing Soldiers having priority.

College proctoring services are based on space availability and funding. On training holidays Army Education Centers will only provide limited counseling services and will be closed on all federal holidays.

For more, call Katterbach at DSN 467-2817, CIV 09802-83-2817 or Storck Barracks at DSN 467-4272, CIV 09841-83-4272.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Utility meters

Employees of the Schweinfurt City Works and Directorate of Public Works will be visiting each government leased house in the Schweinfurt community to read meters and determine the actual usage of electricity, gas, water, and district heating. This process is ongoing until Jan. 31. Residents are requested to ensure the authorized inspectors have easy access to the meters. Inspectors will carry identification and work Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

For more or to make an appointment prior to their visit, call CIV 09721-96-6201, CIV 09721-96-6458.

NFL Sunday football

The Conn Community Club continues to offer Sunday night football at the patio bar from 6:30 p.m. - midnight. Enjoy big screen action, drinks and munchies, and a free post-event shuttle to Ledward. Only those 18 and older are able to participate. The action will continue every Sunday through Jan. 24.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-8476.

Presidents’ Day ski trip

Schweinfurt Outdoor Recreation is taking a trip to Dolomites, Italy Feb. 12 through 15. Cost is \$299 for adults and children five years and older and free for children four and under. Transportation, three nights lodging, breakfasts, dinner, equipment rental and optional snowboarding lessons are included in price. Lift ticket costs extra. Sign up by Feb. 5.

For more or to sign up, call CIV 09721-96-8080, DSN 353-8080.

Theatre auditions

The community theatre seeks three males and one female for the upcoming presentation of “P.S. Your Cat is Dead!” by James Kirkwood. Auditions are held Jan. 26 and Jan. 27 at 5 p.m.

For more, call CIV 0162-296-2776.

Night skiing

Throughout the month of January, Outdoor Recreation will take trips to Wasserkuppe in the Rhoen Mountains Saturdays from 5 - 11 p.m. for night skiing and snowboarding. Cost is \$29 for transportation and equipment rental and \$19 if no equipment is needed. Lift ticket costs extra.

For more or to sign up, call CIV 09721-96-8080.

Excess property sale

Stop by Ledward bldg. 217 for an excess property sale Jan. 29 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and peruse sports equipment, electronics, housewares, toys, furniture, and more. Credit cards, cash, and checks are accepted.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-6437.

Baby & Me swim class

The School of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills offers Baby & Me swim classes for babies ages 4 to 18 months. The next class will be held Jan. 27 at the Schonungen Swimming Pool from 11 a.m. - noon. Cost is \$50 for the course.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-6460, CIV 09721-96-6414.

Interview 101

Come to the Interview 101 training course Jan. 26 at Army Community Service from 2 - 3 p.m. The class provides information on how to prepare for a successful job interview including types of questions, how to answer, and more.

For more or to sign up, call CIV 09721-96-6933, CIV 354-6933.

Fitness classes

Keep an eye out for the many fitness classes offered by the Finney and Kessler Fitness Centers. Those interested can request circuit training and fitness equipment orientation in addition to the numerous classes held daily.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-8234 or 6735.

Schweinfurt homeschoolers

Parents and children of the Schweinfurt homeschooling community are invited to attend a monthly meeting, the first Tuesday of each month, at the Kessler Bowling Center from 1 - 3 p.m. This is a great way for parents and children to share ideas and meet other homeschooling families in the community.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-6057.

Playmorning

Attend playmornings every Tuesday and Thursday 10 - 11:30 a.m. at School Age Services. Parents with children ages newborn to 3 are encouraged to attend. Meet other parents, build your child’s social skills, play games, and participate in developmental activities.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

BOSS meet n’ greet

The Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, or BOSS, program invites you to a meet n’ greet tomorrow at the Finney Recreation Center from 1 - 5 p.m. Mingle with other Soldiers of the

community while enjoying numerous activities. For more, call CIV 09721-96-8476, DSN 353-8476.

POC training

Interested in becoming a point of contact for your family readiness group? Come to the POC training at Army Community Service tomorrow from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Love and Logic parenting

Parenting doesn’t come with a manual, but learning to become a “Love and Logic” parent may make the job a little easier. Come to the Army Community Service class Jan. 26 from 9 - 11 a.m. to discover your parenting style and learn tips on how to raise loving, respectful, and responsible children.

For more, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Socialize at the Lunch Bunch

Do you want to get out of the house, make a few new friends, and learn where good restaurants are around town? The Army Community Service monthly Lunch Bunch is the perfect fit. Join Schweinfurt’s Lunch Bunch Jan. 28 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Sign up for the carpool or call to get directions to the restaurant at DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933. Experience a little of the German culture with an English-speaking guide to help you translate the menu. Children are welcome. Please bring euros for lunch.

Treasurer training

Find out the responsibilities of being a treasurer at Army Community Service’s class “Treasurer training” at the Yellow Ribbon Room Jan. 28 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Learn how to run a ledger, a monthly report of funds, and more.

Call CIV 09721-96-6933.

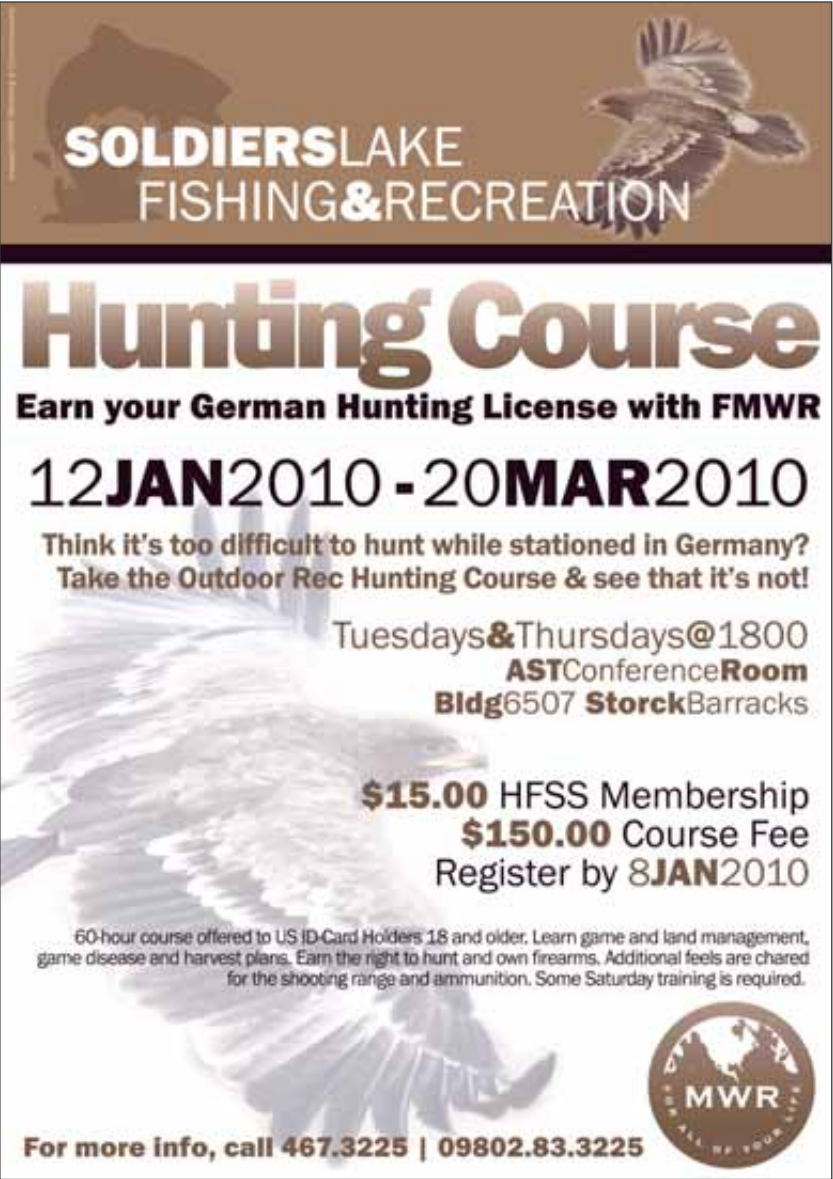
SKIES Unlimited

The School of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills, or SKIES, offers countless opportunities for the youth of Schweinfurt to get involved, learn a new talent, or improve an old one. Youth of all ages have options of ballet, choir, guitar, karate, horseback riding, scuba diving, and much more.

For a complete list of classes or for more, call CIV 09721-96-6460.

Cosmic bowling

Enjoy an evening of cosmic bowling at the Kessler bowling alley on Fridays and Saturdays from 8 p.m. - midnight. Dim the lights, turn on the disco ball, and listen to the music as you bowl your best game ever.



SOLDIERS LAKE FISHING & RECREATION

Hunting Course

Earn your German Hunting License with FMWR

12 JAN 2010 - 20 MAR 2010


Think it's too difficult to hunt while stationed in Germany?
Take the Outdoor Rec Hunting Course & see that it's not!

Tuesdays & Thursdays @ 1800
AST Conference Room
Bldg 6507 Storck Barracks

\$15.00 HFSS Membership
\$150.00 Course Fee
Register by **8 JAN 2010**

60-hour course offered to US ID-Card Holders 18 and older. Learn game and land management, game disease and harvest plans. Earn the right to hunt and own firearms. Additional fees are charged for the shooting range and ammunition. Some Saturday training is required.


For more info, call 467.3225 | 09802.83.3225



COMMUNITY THEATRE

2010 SEASON

Garland Travis Entertainment Director | Stephen Connolly Music/Theatre Assistant

 <p>THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW</p> <p>u.s. Military Community World Premiere</p> <p>Book, Music & Lyrics by RICHARD O'BRIEN</p> <p>FEBRUARY 18-20 & 25-27, 7 P.M. FEBRUARY 19, 20, 26 & 27, 12 A.M. Tickets: \$12 • Adults Only</p>	 <p>P.S. Your Cat is Dead!</p> <p>by JAMES KIRKWOOD</p> <p>AUDITIONS JANUARY 26-27, 5 P.M. Roles: Adults (3 Males & 1 Female)</p>	 <p>Seussical Jr.</p> <p>Book by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty Music by Stephen Flaherty Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens Co-Conceived by Eric Idle Based on the works of Dr. Seuss</p> <p>AUDITIONS APRIL 13, 5 P.M. Roles: Youth ages 10-18</p>
--	---	---


For more information, call 0162-296-2776 or email garland.travis@eur.army.mil.

COMMUNITY THEATRE

USAG SCHWEINFURT

ABRAMS

ENTERTAINMENT CENTER



Cairo ● uncovering ancient treasures

Story and photos by
AMY NEWCOMB
Special to the Bavarian News

Thinking of escaping to somewhere warmer and drier during the wintery wetness of Bavaria, then heading south is what you want to do. How about heading to Cairo, Egypt?

My journey to Cairo began during the winter months and I was grateful to land in a warmer climate, especially since during the summer months Cairo can be unbearably hot. Once reaching Cairo International Airport, I prepared to purchase my \$15 visa from the bank tellers in the arrival hall before proceeding through passport control, but only because I had been forewarned. However, if you do forget money to purchase your visa, there are plenty of ATMs along the way.

The terminal, which had recently been renovated over the last couple of years, was warm and welcoming. There were plenty of friendly taxi drivers willing to take me to the hotel of my choice but I already had a ride. My cousin who was living and working there at the time had promised to pick me up and show me around for a few days.

My first Egyptian experience was exhilarating and terrifying at the same time. We got behind the wheel of my cousin's rental and headed out of the airport in the early hours of the morning. This is when you would think everything is quiet and everyone is sleeping, but there were still plenty of people walking and loitering along the side of the road. Cairo is truly a city that never sleeps.

We headed to her apartment in Maadi, which is a suburb of Cairo where most of the expatriates and foreigners live. She decided to take a shortcut but to do this we had to travel through the "City of the Dead."

The "City of the Dead" is a four-mile long concrete cemetery with tombs and mausoleums where people live and work among their dead ancestors. People either live here to be near loved ones or because they were forced there due to Cairo's unceasing housing shortage.

Once we arrived at her apartment I offloaded my bags, had a quick cup of coffee and we were off to Giza. This is a city just a short drive south of Cairo and has a history that dates back 5,000 years. One of the main reasons I wanted to make the 15 minute drive to Giza was to see the famous Pyramids.

These three pyramids were built for three Egyptian rulers during the fourth dynasty, around 2601-2515 B.C. They are considered one of the Wonders of the World and are an awesome sight to behold. An added benefit is that you can actually go inside one of the pyramids.

You travel down a very steep and narrow set of steps and then back up again into the tomb chamber. This trek is not for

the faint of heart as the air underneath the pyramid is thin and the climb can be a bit treacherous. However, it's definitely worth the effort.

The Great Sphinx is beside the pyramids, bearing witness to thousands of years of history at the Giza plateau. The Great Sphinx, which guarded the pyramids, has the body of a lion and the head of a pharaoh who wears a royal headdress.

After traipsing over the Giza necropolis and avoiding the camel men intent on getting me to ride their camels, which I decided was a bit too scary, we headed for lunch at the Sequoia, a ritzy restaurant overlooking the famous Nile River which had fabulous Egyptian cuisine. We ordered pita bread which we used to scoop up hummus which is a sauce or dip made from chickpeas as we lounged on their very comfortable pillow chairs. We also ordered a round of Stella which is the most famous brand of beer in Egypt.

After lunch we jumped back on the highway or more specifically what is called Ring Road. This is Egypt's most famous beltway and circles the city of Cairo. The highway has eight lanes and is approximately 100 kilometers long.

Along this highway you'll see any number of interesting things. There are donkey-driven carts pulling raw meat, families on motorcycles, pedestrians crossing the road at their leisure and cars parked along the side visiting with friends they saw along the way. You will see many things on Ring Road that you would never see on Germany's autobahn.

We decided that we had experienced enough fun and excitement for one day and headed back to Maadi to relax.

We walked along the streets of Maadi visiting some of the local shops.

the keepers in the area who spoke excellent English and had beautiful hand-woven rugs as well as a store that sold hookahs, pipes that are used to smoke shisha, or fruit-flavored tobacco.

The following morning we headed out again for more shopping. Egypt's most famous market is the Khan el-Khalili market and was once known as the Turkish bazaar during the Ottoman period. This market was founded in 1382 by the Emir

Djaharks el-Khalili and is located in the medieval or Islamic part of Cairo. Now referred to as the Khan, which means market, it represents the market tradition which established Cairo as a major center of trade.

Here, you'll find many foreign and domestic merchants selling everything from gold to candy. There are mosques on every corner as well as Coptic churches and medieval gates.

After the hustle and bustle of the Khan el-Khalili market, we decided to head over to the new ritzy mall called City Stars. I felt like I had time warped to another place and time. The new mall included 643 stores with a 6,000 square meter indoor theme park and a state-of-the-art 16 screen cinema complex. This seven-floor mall had everything from stores like Guess and Esprit to restaurants like On The Border, where I stopped to eat chicken quesadillas and watch the camel races.

After the camel races I had one more stop to make. My trip to Cairo would not have been

complete if I had not visited the Al-Azhar Mosque and university.

This mosque was named in honor of the daughter of Muhammad, Fatima Az-Zahraa. Built in 971 A.D., it's still connected to the school of theology. The university was founded in 988 A.D. and is the oldest Islamic university in the world.

Entrance to the mosque is through the 15th century Barber's Gate, where students traditionally had their heads shaved, and leads to a 10th century courtyard that is saturated with architectural accents from the Fatimid period.

After all my travels in Cairo, it was time to head back to Germany, but not before I reflected on all I had seen on my journey.

Along with being a pulsing metropolis and the capital of Egypt, as well as the largest city on the African continent, Cairo showed me both modern amenities and ancient Egyptian remnants.

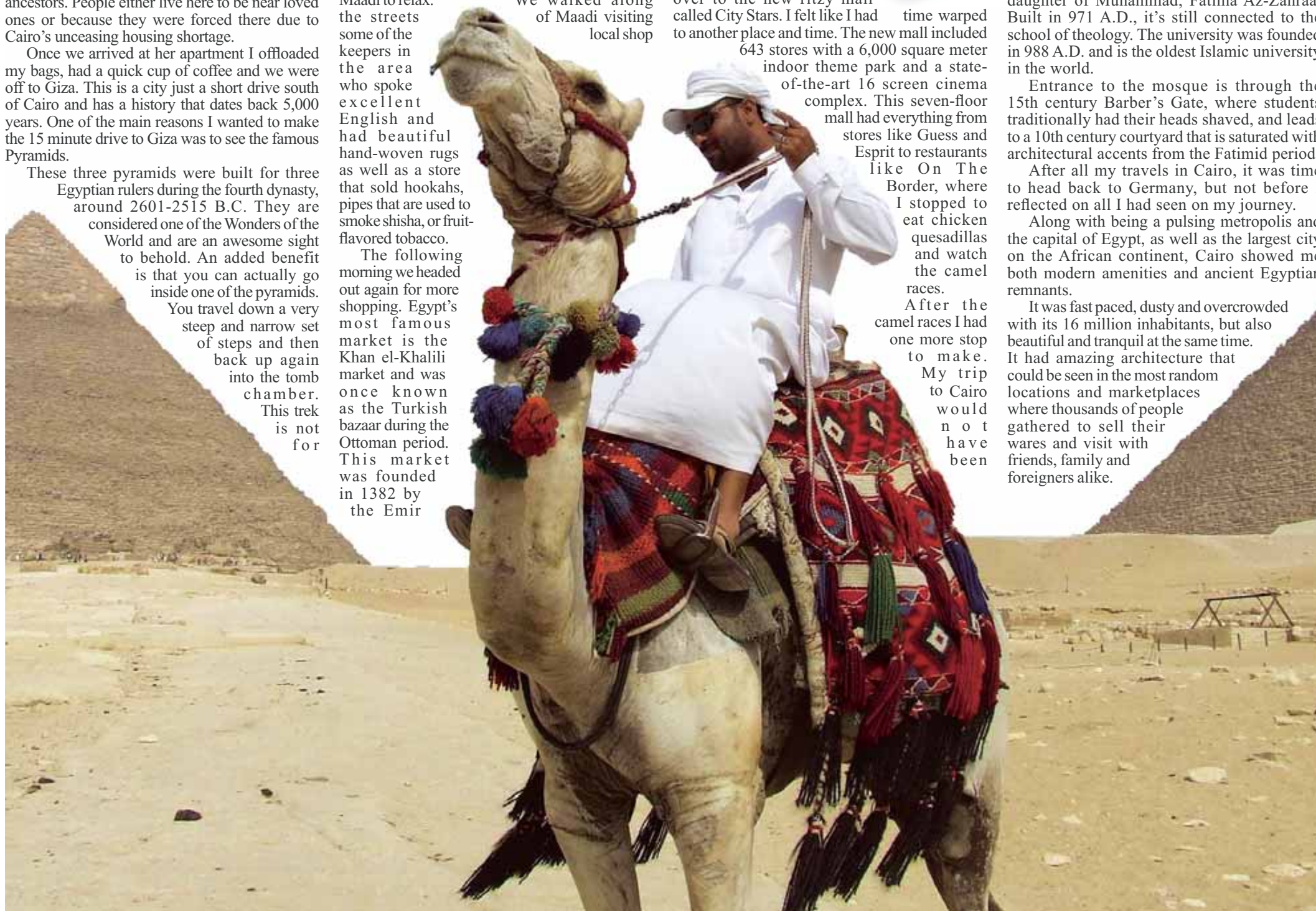
It was fast paced, dusty and overcrowded with its 16 million inhabitants, but also beautiful and tranquil at the same time. It had amazing architecture that could be seen in the most random locations and marketplaces where thousands of people gathered to sell their wares and visit with friends, family and foreigners alike.



Above: The Sphinx sits tall as the Giza Pyramid rises into the sky behind it.

Left: The Citadel rests on the Cairo horizon.

Below: A camel stands with its driver in front of several pyramids.



COMMENTARY

Health care gets a new name

by **CAROL WESNOSKI**
Vilseck Health Clinic

Population health is not a new idea. It’s just a fancy new name for what doctors and nurses do every day – help people take care of themselves.

Every Army health clinic in Bavaria has a population health nurse. She or he has two jobs. The first job is to help people stay healthy. She does this by helping them make appointments for Pap smears, mammograms and colon cancer screenings. She can also help them decide which kinds of screenings are appropriate for them.

The second job of the population health nurse is to help people with certain chronic diseases, such as diabetes and asthma, stay healthy. It is her job to make sure that people with these diseases get items such as their blood work and medicines in a timely manner.

Sometimes people simply need to be reminded that yes, it has been six months since their last diabetes blood work, or yes, it has been a year since their last mammogram.

But some people think that ignoring the problem - if there is one - will make it go away. These people need to realize that cancer, for instance, cannot be ignored. Losing a foot to amputation when a person doesn’t take care of his or her diabetes is a real thing. Few people would choose blindness or amputation, if given a choice, and yet that’s exactly what they do when they don’t take care of their diabetes. Many



Carol Wesnoski, population health nurse at the Vilseck Health Clinic, explains the importance of wellness screenings to one of her patients, Jan. 8. Wesnoski helps patients maintain and improve their health through screenings and disease management.

Photo by Jennifer Walsh

“harmless” diseases will kill you if they are not cared for properly.

Patients play a significant role in maintaining their health. While at the clinic, patients should visit the population health nurse to make a wellness appointment. Patients who have any kind of treatment or screening outside the clinic should bring a copy of their doctor’s report to the clinic so it can be scanned into the patient’s record. While that information eventually gets to the patient’s record, it is important for patient’s medical records to always be as complete as possible. Continuity of care, which is making sure the patient’s primary care manager is aware of his or her health, is important.

During the month of January, nurses at the Vilseck Health Clinic will call all diabetic patients and schedule appointments for them. The nurses will go over the diabetic scorecard with their patients to determine their individual needs. However, patients living in other communities can take charge of their health by calling their local health clinic to set up an appointment.

There is an old saying that “you have nothing if you don’t have your health.” I would add to this “good health is a gift you give to yourself.”

Editor’s Note: Carol Wesnoski is a population health nurse at the Vilseck Health Clinic.

Cervical health the focus in January

by **JENNIFER WALSH**
BMEDDAC Public Affairs

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month and Bavaria Medical Department Activity officials are urging women to kick off the new year by taking charge of their health.

“It’s about getting the appropriate screenings, but it’s also about taking the time to learn more about your body and how it functions,” said Ann Petersen,

community health nurse at the Vilseck Health Clinic. “So this month we’re focusing on how to prevent cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the easiest female cancer to prevent with regular screening tests and follow-up. It’s also highly curable when found and treated early.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 12,000 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer and approximately 4,000 women died

from the disease in 2005. However, cervical cancer remains one of the most preventable diseases because of the screenings available for women, such as the Pap smear.

“The Pap smear is the greatest defense for cervical cancer,” Petersen said, “because the Pap smear can detect cervical changes early before they turn into cancer.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control, six of every 10 cervical cancer cases occur in women who have never had a Pap smear or had not been tested in the previous five years. The American Academy of Family Physicians, as well as Petersen, recommends women have their first Pap smear when they turn 21 years old. Women should also schedule a Pap smear if they are under the age of 21 and have been sexually active for three or more years.

Women can take preventive measures against cervical cancer by limiting the number of sexual partners they have, using condoms, not smoking, following up with abnormal Pap smears and getting vaccinated against the Human Papillomavirus, or HPV.

“An important recent discovery is the vaccination for girls and

women called the HPV vaccine,” said Ruth Rochat, a nurse practitioner at the Grafenwoehr Health Clinic. “It protects you from some of the viruses that may cause abnormal Pap smears and cervical changes that can lead to cervical cancer.”

The vaccine, which is known by the trade name Gardasil, is available at all of the Army health clinics in Bavaria. Rochat recommends patients ask their health care provider if they are eligible for the vaccine.

Women who are waiting to see symptoms before they go in for a wellness screening may be surprised to know that cervical cancer is asymptomatic.

“Unfortunately, there are no specific signs or symptoms,” Rochat said. “That’s why it’s so important to understand all you can about your body and be aware of all the things you can do to make sure you live a long and healthy life.”

Women interested in scheduling a Pap smear should contact their local Army health clinic and make an appointment for a well-woman exam. For more information on cervical cancer, visit the CDC at www.cdc.gov.

a shot of advice

by **Lt. Col. STEPHEN LINCK**
BMEDDAC

I sincerely hope everyone had a wonderful and safe holiday season. I am rested and ready for a new year.

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month so I have chosen a couple of questions about the Human Papillomavirus or HPV.

HPV is a common virus that exists in more than 100 different strains. For this edition of “A Shot of Advice” I will focus on the strains that affect cervical health.

Q. Sir, I’m 26 years old, but a friend of mine told me I should still get the HPV vaccine to help prevent cervical cancer. Isn’t the vaccine ineffective after a certain age though? I thought the vaccine was marketed toward girls in middle and high school. Also, are there any side effects?

Sincerely,
On the Fence in Freihung

A. Dear On the Fence, I am really excited to get this question and let me tell you why. Gardasil, the trade name for the HPV vaccine, is the very first vaccine of any kind proven to reduce the risk of cancer. Medical breakthroughs are very exciting and this one makes me especially happy.

The HPV vaccine is approved for use in women ages 9 to 26 and consists of three injections at zero, two, and six months apart. Gardasil covers four strains of HPV so even though you are 26 years old, it will protect you in case of any future exposure.

The vaccine was proven safe in studies and the most common reported side effect is pain at the injection site.

To be sure you are a candidate to receive the vaccine you should consult with your health care provider.

Q. How is HPV spread? I’ve heard that it is a sexually-transmitted disease, but is it also genetic? Is it possible for me to have HPV and not know it? Do men get HPV too or just women?

Respectfully,
Curious about HPV in Hohenfels

A. Dear Curious, There are a lot of questions listed. Let me try and get through all of them with the limited space we have. The types of HPV we are talking about are most commonly spread through sexual or intimate contact.

The second part of the question is very difficult to answer because I don’t think medical science knows the answer. It is quite possible some people have a genetic disposition to developing complications from exposure to HPV, but it is not transmitted from person to person though genetics.

It is very possible to carry HPV and never know it. Some versions of the virus cause warts and others are completely benign. This is the main reason to follow recommendations for routine Pap smears.

Lastly, yes, men can get HPV. With the exception of a few strains that cause warts, men will never know if they were exposed to HPV.

However, the most recent update to the package insert for Gardasil states that the vaccine is approved in males 9 to 26 years old to prevent genital warts. Your local health care provider can provide you with all the information on the HPV vaccine.

If you need a shot of advice, e-mail your question to brmc-pao@amedd.army.mil.

ERMC Care Call Center to benefit Bavaria

BMEDDAC Press Release

The Bavaria Medical Department Activity is streamlining the way medical appointments are made by transitioning individual clinic appointment lines to an enhanced Europe Regional Medical Command Care Call Center located in Heidelberg.

The ERM Care Call Center will be available to Katterbach and Illesheim beneficiaries beginning Feb. 1. The remaining Bavaria clinics in Bamberg, Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Schweinfurt and Vilseck are expected to make the transition in the coming months.

“This is going to be a great resource for our beneficiaries,” said Maj. Timothy Switaj, Katterbach Health Clinic commander. “By using the ERM Care Call Center, patients are going to experience a more efficient appointment-making process and improved access to care.”

Beneficiaries will have access to 30 booking clerks who will help them schedule their medical appointments at their local Army health clinic. Hours of operation will be weekdays from 6 a.m.-6 p.m. The call

center will be closed on weekends and federal holidays.

“Beneficiaries who use the ERM Care Call Center will also have the option of being connected to a registered nurse with the Nurse Advice Line or selecting an option to hear clinic-specific information,” Switaj said. “The ERM Care Call Center is a single phone number for all of your medical needs.”

The DSN line for Ansbach area beneficiaries will be 371-2622, CIV 06221-17-2622.

The toll-free number will be 0800-914-6133.

According to ERM, it is anticipated that by summer 2010 appointments at all Army health clinics across Germany - including primary care clinics at Landstuhl Regional Medical

Center - will be made by calling a single phone number at the call center.

For beneficiaries who prefer to use the Web, Switaj recommends they visit Tricare Online at www.tricareonline.com to make their appointments.

“Tricare Online is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” Switaj said.

“All you have to do is register and you can start booking your medical appointments online. It’s easy, it’s convenient and it’s free,” he said.

For updates about when the remaining clinics in Bavaria will transition to the ERM Care Call Center, continue to read the Bavarian News and watch Armed Forces Network.

Questions can be directed to the BMEDDAC public affairs office at DSN 476-4605, CIV 09662-83-4605.

The ERM Care Call Center is a single phone number for all of your medical needs.

Maj. Timothy Switaj
Katterbach Health Clinic commander

Warriors maximize Afghan downtime



Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Eduardo Molina

With his faithful military working dog Agbar at his side, Sgt. Michael Chambers works his way through the three levels of Army Family Team Building modules during deployment.

Story and photo by
JOHN REESE

USAG Garmisch Public Affairs

When deployed Military Policeman Sgt. Michael Chambers and his four-legged partner “Staff Sgt.” Agbar aren’t working together, they’re studying together. Recently, they completed all three levels of the Army Family Team Building course - together.

Chambers and his tail-wagging teammate are currently pulling duty downrange at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, away from their family and regular duties in Garmisch with the 554th MP Company, and the nine-year veteran decided to put his limited free time to good use.

“I’ll benefit from what the courses had to offer,” said Chambers, knowing that he earned promotion points in addition to gaining important skills. “The information will help my family and will help me be a better-rounded leader as I move forward in my Army career.”

Chambers is the first active duty Soldier from Garmisch to complete the AFTB training, noted Doris Tyler, Army Community Service director for Garmisch.

“He enhanced his leadership skills by taking the classes offered by the AFTB program,” said Tyler. “He’ll also be better able to mentor his Soldiers when in a leadership role and assist their families with the knowledge gained by his participation in the program; when he returns he can help ACS educate others about the program in Garmisch and any future assignments.”

“I’m proud of him and glad that he is taking advantage of every opportunity to fill his down-time constructively,” said spouse Kayla Chambers, who works for Garmisch ACS and encouraged him to take the course after she completed the three AFTB levels.

Finishing all three AFTB levels will help the couple and their two young children prosper as an Army family, added Tyler.

“AFTB has modules on dealing with the demands of the military lifestyle, communication and conflict resolution,” said Tyler.

Chambers and Agbar were featured in a Stars and Stripes photo Oct. 6, showing the best friends sharing a snack while on a mission at Forward Operating Base Gardez, Afghanistan.

Although “Staff Sgt.” Agbar kept company with Chambers throughout the classes, ACS insists that he was only there for moral support and never barked the correct answers.

Military working dogs are given an honorary rank of one stripe above their handler, Chambers said.

“Just make sure y’all mention Agbar in the story; he likes being in the paper,” said Chambers.



Photo by John Reese

Wunderbar Wednesdays

Skiers and snowboarders participate in uniquely Garmisch youth ski instruction program Wonderful Wednesday, which began Jan. 6, the first day on skis for some of the students of Garmisch Elementary-Middle School.

Wonderful Wednesday (and a Saturday version for the littlest skiers) is a joint effort between the school, the garrison community and FMWR Youth Services, offering 10-weeks of beginning-to-advanced ski and snowboard lessons at a top European ski resort while meeting Department of Defense school physical education standards.

The program has been in existence for more than 30 years and is so popular that 93 percent of the Garmisch student population is participating.

USAG Garmisch FMWR polls post to rename recycled pub

Story and photo by
JOHN REESE

USAG Garmisch Public Affairs

Being a remote garrison spread out over three small kasernes and scattered Bavarian outposts, it was a big blow to the community when the only Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation pizza restaurant and beer garden of U.S. Army Garrison Garmisch closed in late 2008 for major refurbishment. And when it closed, it took away the garrison’s one watering hole along with a handful of popular slot machines.

The garrison needed a temporary solution, and FMWR boss Steve Gauthier found one in an unused former officer’s club over the theater in the northeast corner of post near the second gate, conveniently located close to housing for students attending classes at the George C. Marshall Center and the Partner Language Training Center-Europe.

“This club was closed down years ago — 2005? — and the food, drink and gaming operations were relocated into Dolomiti’s, the restaurant behind the Pete Burke Center,” explained Gauthier. “And when Dolomiti’s closed a year ago, the hundreds of residents in the Breitenau Housing Area and TDY personnel living here had no place similar to go without exiting post.”

The only options for casual dining currently on post, courtesy of AAFES, are a few hot snacks or frozen microwaveable treats at the shoppette, or the Subway concession. Subway recently added individual pizzas to its menu, satisfying that urge. Espresso Coffee provides a place from sunrise to afternoon to meet over breakfast sandwiches, fresh beignets and a hot cup of joe. All three venues are located in the PX and commissary complex.

Still, a place to relax evenings in the traditional Army club sense was lacking, and the dusty old club on the second floor of Building 262 just needed its small pub polished up and put back into service. For decades following World War II, Artillery Kaserne was a busy Army garrison, not tapering off until the mid-1990s, and the club was popular to military and civilian employees and local citizens.



Jan Denikewicz’s glass may be as empty now as the former officers’ club, but soon the pub-to-be-named will be filled with happy FMWR customers.

“This place used to really be hopping,” said longtime Garmisch FMWR supervisor Jan Denikewicz, referring to the busier days when the back gate was Artillery Kaserne’s front door; that gate has a pedestrian entrance and is used as an alternate for vehicular traffic as needed. “It has the potential for greatness again if customers know about it.”

The pub will be open to all granted access on post, he added.

“Reopening this part of the old club is a labor of love,” explained Gauthier. “This is being done for the community, and we’ll grow and adapt as customer demand dictates. We’ll be testing the waters with new technologies, like Wi-Fi, and

this is the chance for the community to tell us what they like and what they want to see added.”

Because some of the new technologies require contracted work, the initial opening will be a soft one followed by a grand opening after initial customer reaction and feedback. It’s a chance for the customers to “vote with their feet,” said Gauthier, offering them an on-post choice that will grow with customer patronage.

In addition to the small club being reopened, the entire second floor is suitable for refurbishing; a quick exploration of the former club also revealed a comfortable wood paneled Bavarian “Stueber!” (small pub room) currently being used as a guard’s training classroom, a smaller

conference room, and a larger restaurant area, all with sliding walls opening up a large conference room or restaurant. With the current tightening of budgets across the Army and the emphasis on providing the best possible support to the war fighters, it will be some time before any big changes are made soon, said Gauthier.

“It’s already a big year for Garmisch FMWR projects to come to fruition around the garrison,” said Gauthier. “And over the next two years, we’re relocating outdoor recreation, our excellent trips and travel, and Army Community Service into Building 250 after it is fixed-up, and the Pete Burke Community Center is scheduled to be remodeled.”

When the first floor community theater in Building 262 closed more than a year ago for renovations the traffic around the building slowed down, bringing up the yin and yang adages of “location, location, location” versus “if you build it, they will come.” However, the structure is passed daily by international military personnel living on post while taking Marshall Center classes across the river on Sheridan Kaserne, and it’s a two-minute walk from the housing for the joint services language school. It is a brief march from the housing area for single Soldiers. FMWR’s car wash, Auto Crafts Shop and Crafts Tree are adjacent. The dining facility for students is next door.

“We believe this can become a popular spot again where Soldiers and guests can relax without the need to drive off-post, but we need to give it a name,” said Gauthier. “It was called Dolomiti’s in its last incarnation, and that name moved with it when the operation moved — but we aren’t in Italy or the Dolomite mountains — we’re in the German Alps, and we need a name better suited to our community.”

An even earlier incarnation was named Marco’s Jukebox Bar and Grill, noted Denikewicz.

Thus the contest to name the new club, scheduled for the soft opening by early February 2010. Anyone can submit a name at www.garmisch.army.mil. Although there is no prize, yet, for whoever comes up with the club’s handle, Denikewicz has a suggestion.

“We’ll put the winning name — or the winner’s name — up in lights,” said Denikewicz.

Save a Life Tour visits Ansbach

Story and photo by
GINI SINCLAIR

USAG Ansbach Public Affairs

The Save a Life Tour brought its unique state-of-the-art training to Ansbach, Dec. 14-15. The tour set up video equipment, a drunken-driving simulator and a casket at the gym in Katterbach Kaserne. The following day, Dec. 16, the entire assembly moved to the gym at Storck Barracks. A total of 12 sessions were held for Ansbach community members with one session reserved for students from Ansbach High School.

Each session included an hourlong video, discussion and use of the drunken-driving simulator. Brian Seitz Beldyga, senior manager, Save a Life Tour, discussed statistics about drunken driving and explained some of the effects alcohol has on the body. Participants watched the video "Red Asphalt," a movie Seitz Beldyga said is mandatory for drivers in California. "Smash," another video the tour sometimes uses, is a frequent show on HBO.

According to Seitz Beldyga, each drunken driver in the U.S. who is caught has driven drunk an average of 427 times before being caught. He also said the U.S. is number three for the most DUIs committed by country. Sweden is number two for the largest amount of alcohol consumed, yet it is has the least number of people killed by DUIs.

Seitz Beldyga discussed three forms of reinforcement, positive, negative and neutral, during his presentation. To have positive reinforcement, individuals must have an emotion

involved with the lesson.

"Without an emotional involvement the lesson isn't as strong," he said. Members of the audience who have lost someone to a DUI or been

involved themselves are emotionally attached to the lesson. Otherwise, Seitz Beldyga said, the lesson is probably neutral. When he asked the audience how many had a positive reaction about

half the members raised their hands.

Following the video and some discussion about drunken driving, a member of the audience was invited to take the wheel of the simulator. The simulator has levels of difficulty programmed which approximate how a person drinking alcohol responds. A higher degree of difficulty corresponds with a greater amount of alcohol consumed.

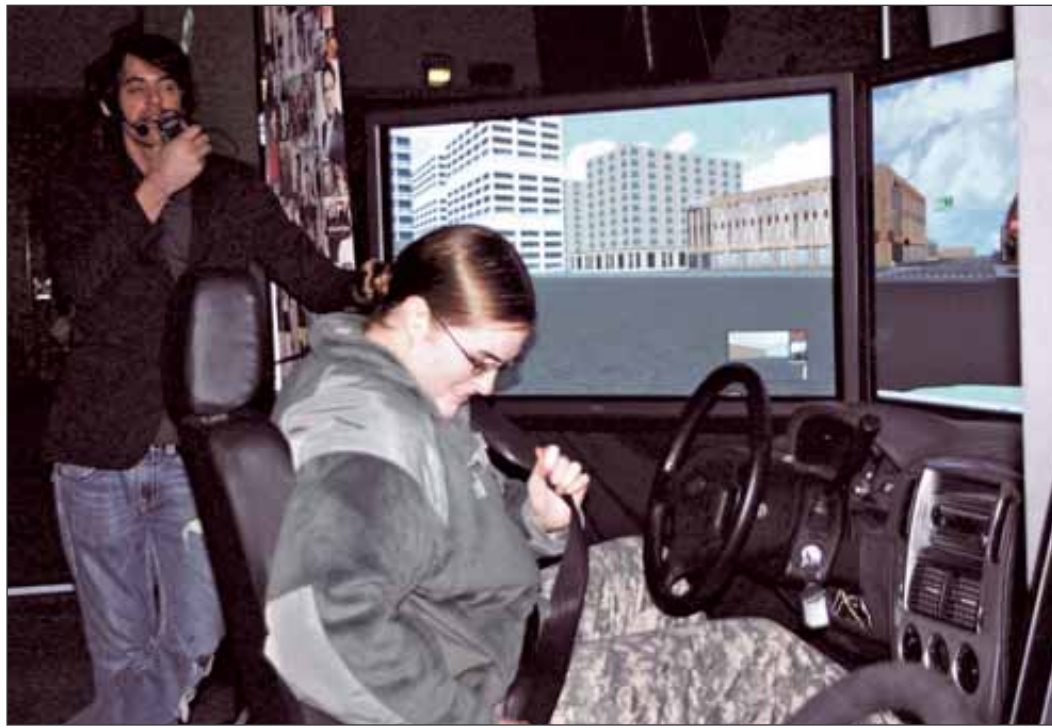
Sgt. Anna Perry, rear detachment noncommissioned officer in charge for the public affairs office, HHC, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, drove the simulator. Seitz Beldyga cautioned her that he would "pick on" her while she was driving.

At one point Perry was approaching a traffic light when Seitz Beldyga told her to go ahead. When Perry ran the light, Seitz Beldyga pointed out she was supposed to stop. Perry remonstrated that he had told her to go ahead. Seitz Beldyga then asked "Is that what you are going to tell the cops? My friend told me to."

After the official session of the tour ended, other audience members took their turn on the drunken-driving simulator. Seitz Beldyga and Andrew Tipton, manager, Save a Life Tour, talked individually with audience members.

Seitz Beldyga said the one-on-one interactions are the most rewarding part of his job, and that it makes him feel good to have audience members come up and shake his hand.

The Save a Life Tour is on tour about 280 days a year. It sets up in all kinds of areas in order to get its message out and hope to save lives by doing so.



Sgt. Anna Perry, rear detachment NCOIC for public affairs, HHC, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, buckles the drunken driver simulator seat belt while Brian Seitz Beldyga, senior manager, Save a Life Tour, gives instructions.

Outlets for winter sports in the area abound

by **BIANCA SOWDERS**

USAG Ansbach Public Affairs

One of the great advantages of living in southern Germany is that wherever you live there is bound to be a place close for outdoor activity. During the winter months many folks like to ski, snowboard and sled, or simply take long walks in the fresh

crisp air.

Avoid the traffic jams going south to the many well-known and published places in the Alpine region and check out these smaller scale slopes that can be reached within a couple hours, are not as costly, and make the perfect destination for a day trip.

The Fichtelgebirge is a medium mountain range shaped like a

horseshoe east of Bayreuth. Its main towns are Marktredwitz, Wunsiedel and Selb, and the highest mountains are the Schneeberg at 1,053 meters and the Ochsenkopf at 1,024 meters. The Fichtelgebirge can be reached via Autobahn A6 to A9 in about 90 minutes.

Towns like Mehlmeisel and Bischofsgruen at the foot of the

Ochsenkopf offer gondolas and several T-bar lifts, some of which are open daily from 9 a.m. until 10 p.m. thanks to a floodlight system. In times of little precipitation snow canons ensure there is enough snow for skiing.

In the same area there is also the "Nordic Parc" with many options and tracks for the cross-country fan. For more information, log on to www.klausenlift.de and www.nordic-parc.de.

Special snowboarding parks can be found near the towns of Oberwarmensteinach (www.skilifte-devalkartbahn.de), Bischofsgruen (www.skilift-latta.de) or Kornberg (www.kornberg.de).

For a complete listing of all the winter sport opportunities in Fichtelgebirge, go to www.ti-fichtelgebirge.de or www.freizeitfuehrer-franken.de/wintersport-fichtelgebirge

The area east of the city of Weiden is called the Oberpfälzer Wald and has quite a few places which offer cross-country tracks and alpine ski slopes. The main centers of activity are Vohenstrauss (www.ski-fahrenberg.de) and Schoensee (www.schoenseer-land.de). The area of Vohenstrauss can be reached on Autobahn A6 in a little more than one hour.

A little further away is the Bayerischer Wald (Bavarian Forest), which is approximately two hours

away driving east on the A3 toward the Czech Republic. Although there are many areas to choose from, some of the most popular ones are Grosser Arber, Sankt Englmar or Mitterdorf-Philippseut. The Grosser Arber, the highest mountain in the Bavarian-Bohemian Mountain Range at 1,456-meters, is also known as the king of the Bavarian Forest and rewards skiers with a spectacular panoramic view (www.arber.de).

The Rhoen Mountain Range, a popular resort area just north of Schweinfurt can be reached within less than 90 minutes on A7. The hills Kreuzberg, Wasserkuppe and Arnsberg aren't very high, but still provide for lots of fun in the snow with a total of 27 ski lifts (www.skilifte-kreuzberg.de, www.feuerberglift.de, www.arnsberglift.de). On pretty days there is even a chance to take a trip in a hot-air balloon (www.rhoener-balloener.de).

It is always a good idea to check the snow reports before making the trip to any of the places, because the lifts are only open for business if there is enough snow. Most winter sports areas offer ski huts and restaurants to warm up and rest as well.

For a detailed English language listing of ski resorts with snow reports, opening times, prices and more Web addresses, go to www.bergfex.com.

Skiers enjoy a well-prepared downhill ski slope - the slopes are prepared daily with large machines. Snow canons produce extra snow, if there is not enough.

Courtesy photo



Safe winter driving begins with proper planning

Story and photo by
GINI SINCLAIR

USAG Ansbach Public Affairs

While working in a car dealership outside Fort Riley, Kan., a German woman came in asking to have winter air put in her tires.

The mechanics had a good laugh over that, until they figured out she was actually asking for snow tires to be put on her car.

According to Hildegard Schumann, safety officer, U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach, using snow tires is a good idea.

German traffic law doesn't require snow tires for driving in this area, but Schumann said if drivers are in an accident with snow on the road and they don't have snow tires, the insurance company won't pay.

The areas that require snow tires or chains usually have a sign showing that the equipment is required.

Schumann said main roads are generally plowed quickly, but snow may pile up on side roads.

Drivers may encounter snow or ice when going through residential areas.

She explained that snow will often melt a bit during the day and freeze at night when the temperatures are lower.

Then the ice can be hidden by the snow.

According to Schumann, one of the main strategies for driving in the snow is to reduce speed. She said reduced speed is especially important at turns and curves and in areas where the sun doesn't penetrate to help melt the ice or snow on the road.

As well as slowing down, Schumann recommends using headlights whenever necessary. She pointed out that in the winter it gets darker earlier and wet weather conditions can make it harder to see.

Maintenance on a car also contributes to a safe trip in the winter. Schumann recommends checking the tire tread, lights, wipers, heater and defroster before winter. She suggests drivers keep an emergency package in the vehicle as well. This package should consist of a blanket, flashlight, snacks, water and a cell phone.

As well as making sure they are prepared for emergencies, drivers should ensure their cars have plenty of fuel for whatever journey they begin.

Most of all for those trips taken in adverse weather conditions Schumann said to allow extra time for travel.

To stay informed of what weather is expected drivers should watch the weather forecast as well as checking the road conditions as determined by USAG Ansbach.



A local resident clears snow off the car before departing out on the road. German law requires drivers to clear their car before getting on the road.

Renovations broaden opportunities

Story and photo by
NATHAN VAN SCHAIAK
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

The recent completion of the renovation project to the Conn Community Conference Center marks an increased effort to expand the Army Family Covenant within the Schweinfurt community as well as provide a more robust on-post family environment.

Renovation began in June 2009 and ended six months later with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Costs, which amounted to \$713,000, were directed toward overhauling the entire structure both internal and external to the facility.

“Our goal was to improve energy savings and make a more attractive appearance,” said Drake Gibbs, director of the U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt Directorate of Public Works, the organization responsible for the mobilization and on-site construction of the project. “We wanted to attract more Soldiers and families to come and relax. We’re happy with the outcome and very pleased with the end result.”

The project itself — which brought together a range of directorates and managers — is in tune with Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch’s initiative to breathe life into the Army Family Covenant. Since taking command in November, Lynch, commanding general of the Army Installation Management Command, has been committed to delivering quality of life to Soldiers and families to make them more resilient and capable, according to an official IMCOM blog report.

Mike Duday, Schweinfurt’s director of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, explained the renovation project as being part of Lynch’s vision to preserve Army traditions and institutions.

“This renovation is our commitment to sustain quality of life and preserving great Army institutions such as hail and farewells, right arm nights and dining ins ... and provides



After seven months of renovation, the Conn Community Conference Center is open and ready for the public. More than \$700,000 was spent in renovating the conference area, the Irish Pub, the outdoor patio area and an outdoor area geared toward campers.

an additional facility to support training and reintegration needs,” Duday said.

The completed project encompasses the Irish Pub, the conference center, the patio and the outdoor pavilion area. All are available for conferencing and private party catering to all I.D. cardholders, units, family readiness groups, private organizations and family members.

Refurbished restrooms, an expanded array of kitchen equipment, reinstalled insulation, and new handicap access, air conditioners, granite

floors, ceilings and lighting are among the list of upgrades at the facility.

The Irish Pub, which is located in the basement of the pavilion, also received substantial renovation.

And that’s not all.

Along the grassy area adjacent to the club are two new large gazebos, each outfitted with lights and built-in grills and equipped to provide power to electrical appliances such as radios. There are additional playgrounds for children

and a gentrified patio — a permanent structure replacing the white tent, which private parties can rent.

External renovation and outdoor restoration have broadened the garrison’s ability to offer safe and affordable on-post recreation, according to James Barrett, USAG Schweinfurt FMWR chief of business division for clubs and special events. Those with on-post access will be able to camp there, weather-permitting, according to Barrett.

“The grassy area behind the pavilion is now open to those wishing to pitch a tent,” Barrett said.

Barrett, while acknowledging that alcohol is permitted, explained that campfires, RVs and trailers are prohibited. Barrett said people can rent tents and outdoor equipment from the outdoor recreation center.

“During the summer, we’ll see if we can open the patio bar to provide snacks and drinks. Restrooms are available throughout the night,” Barrett said.

Whether people want to take advantage of the new Euro-outdoor patio setting, reserve the Irish Pub for office parties, sleep beneath the stars, or use the conference center for unit functions, one thing is certain: people are pleased with the final product.

For Sgt. 1st Class Richard Wright of the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne), the Irish Pub mixes the convenience of an ideal location with a club atmosphere.

“This is a place near the barracks and near taxis,” Wright said. “You get a comfortable club without the worrying of the currency, the pricey drinks, choking on cigarette smoke, the drinking and driving, and the fighting you might get somewhere else. And there’s no cover charge.”

The Irish Pub is open every Friday and Saturday from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. To rent the pub, conference center, or outdoor patio area, call James Barrett at DSN 354-6186, CIV 09721-96-6186.

Mascot follows 1-91st to Afghanistan

Schweinfurt Elementary students send “flat” pigs to front lines with Soldiers

Story and photos by
NATHAN VAN SCHAIAK
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

They’re arguably the most well-traveled pigs in the world. Delivered from the halls of Schweinfurt Elementary School, Flat Wilbur and Flat Schweinella have spanned the globe where they’re connected downrange with Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Flat Schweinella, a sow, was officially handed over to the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment (Airborne) during an assembly to join the deployed Soldiers in Afghanistan. She is the “wife” of Flat Wilbur who is still attached to the 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery.

“This is a mascot who will deploy downrange and visit all of the kids’ fathers in Afghanistan, as well as accompany them on various missions. It should be a terrific morale boost for the kids throughout the deployment as they receive the pictures from Schweinella’s journey,” said Capt. Chris Shepherd, the rear detachment commander for 1-91st Cav. Regt.

Shepherd delivered a speech and presented a slideshow to the students of Schweinfurt

Elementary School, recently. His pictures, capturing the Afghan landscape, were met with a streaming flow of mesmerized “ews” and “aws.” Many of the students have family members attached to the 1-91st Cav. Regt. deployed in Afghanistan.

Flat Wilbur and Flat Schweinella—literally, flat wooden pigs—are part of a project to engage school children with their parents stationed downrange, according to Megan Stockdill, the school’s registrar.

“Back in 2004 when our dads and moms first deployed, our school thought it would be a fun idea to create a flat Wilbur so that he could go with our dads and moms on their deployment and report back to the student what they were seeing and doing,” Stockdill said.

And when 1-91st Cav. Regt. deployed in 2007, Flat Wilbur was on another deployment. That’s when Flat Schweinella was drafted and christened as the second Schweinfurt Elementary School mascot. She’s now on her way to Afghanistan where she’ll touchdown in Logar with other sky Soldiers of the 1-91st Cav. Regt.

“Five troopers who will be deploying in the next two weeks will deploy Schweinella with them. This was done on the squadron’s previous deployment with great success,” Shepherd said.

Capt. Steven Barnaby of the 1-91st Cav. Regt. will escort the sow to Afghanistan.

“It’s quite an honor,” he said.



Capt. Chris Shepherd, rear detachment commander for the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, speaks to Schweinfurt Elementary School students before being given Schweinella, the school’s mascot (left), which will head east to rendezvous with Soldiers. Students wearing the letter “C” have family members attached to the 1-91st Cav. Regt. deployed in Afghanistan.



106th FMC Soldiers return after yearlong deployment

Delta Detachment makes its presence felt in Iraq

Story and photo by
NATHAN VAN SCHAIAK
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

Soldiers from Delta Detachment, 106th Financial Management Company stand in formation after returning from a 355-day deployment to Iraq, Dec. 19.

The company departed Dec. 29, 2008, and made its triumphant return before a crowd of friends and family at Kessler Fitness Center.

“I feel anxious, excited, nervous and happy,” said Leslie Jones, on the return of her husband, Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Jones.

“Our mission was to provide financial management support. We were very effective,” said Capt. Wansy Paul, company commander to the 106th Financial Management Company.

The 106th Financial Management Company, headquartered out of U.S. Army Garrison Bamberg, provided support to over 16,000 Soldiers and 12,000 civilians at Forward Operating Base Diamondback and Marez within the Multinational Division - North, according to Maj. Mike Mouritsen, the company’s commander.

Health clinic Soldiers train for battle

Soldiers put down patient charts and pick up weapons

by JEN WALSH
BMEDDAC Public Affairs

Reacting to an ambush, performing voice communications and engaging targets in an urban environment, are all part of being a Soldier. But for the Soldiers at the Schweinfurt Army Health Clinic, it's not exactly a typical day at work.

Schweinfurt Health clinic Soldiers had an opportunity to put down their patient charts and get back to the basics during a situational training exercise at the Schweinfurt Training Area, Dec. 11. The scenario-based exercises put Soldiers through several battlefield situations.

"We believe as an organization that scenario-based training serves as an excellent method of putting into practice the classes that have been taught throughout the training cycle," said Sgt. Gale Beaubien, who runs the clinic's training program.

Scenarios included visual signaling techniques; reacting to an unexploded ordnance; entering buildings in urban environments; squad movement techniques; casualty evacuation; and intravenous injection therapy.

"The training was an overall good review of warrior tasks and battle drills. It refreshed my memory of the basics like the nine-line medevac and movement drills," said Pfc. Hyo Cha, laboratory technician.

Although the exercise required preparation and hard work, the clinic leadership believes it was a worthwhile training event.

"The hard work of multiple NCOs throughout the clinic resulted in tough, realistic training for the Soldiers of this organization," said Staff Sgt. Walter Waite, the operations NCO. "I think that this standard of training will serve as a precedent for future training events within the clinic."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Berthold

Spc. Jason Mesa, a combat medic with the Schweinfurt Health Clinic, practices providing medical aid to a Soldier during a training exercise, Dec. 11. The scenario-based training gave Soldiers a chance to review warrior tasks and battle drills.



Photo by Emily Athens

Blood drive aims to save lives

First Lt. Vireak Ouch donates blood in Schweinfurt's Kessler Fitness Center during a blood drive, Jan. 12, sponsored by the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion and the 15th Engineer Battalion.

"The goal is to receive 60 units of blood," said Kimberly Messer, family readiness support technician for the 44th ESB, explaining that hundreds of people can be saved with just that amount. Employees from the Armed Services Blood Program worked hard as over 50 community members came ready to save a life. All blood donated stays within the Department of Defense. "It's from the military to the military to help out our Soldiers and their families," said Schweinfurt lab technician Sgt. Denise Rudolph.

Clinic takes vaccine to community

Staff from Schweinfurt Health Clinic administer H1N1 vaccine to patrons at the post exchange

Story and photo by
NATHAN VAN SCHAIK
USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

Officials from the Schweinfurt Army Health Clinic provided over 20 free H1N1 vaccinations at the entrance to the Post Exchange, Jan. 6, as staff from the Schweinfurt Health Clinic ratchet up efforts to protect the community from the spread of the H1N1 influenza virus.

"This is an outreach program to offer the vaccine so that we can capture people so that they don't have to go to the clinic," said Col. Patrick Denman, commander of the Schweinfurt Health Clinic.

Maj. Vernell Jordan, chief of Army Public Health Nursing Bavaria West, helped administer the vaccines.

"We want to ensure our community is protected from the H1N1 virus. We're doing this as a convenience to the community," Jordan said. "We know they're out and about shopping and eating lunch. This is our opportunity to take it to them."

The health clinic's outreach initiative to provide vaccinations is aimed at all beneficiaries connected to the military, explained Jordan. That list includes active duty members, reservists, family members, retirees and their family members, DoD civilians, PX and commissary employees, and some contractors.

Duane Fauntleroy, a retired sergeant first class from 1st Battalion, 77th Field Artillery, said he was just shopping and felt lucky that the clinic was providing vaccinations.

"This is a luxury that you wouldn't find in the States. You'd have to go to the health clinic," Fauntleroy said.



Maj. Vernell Jordan (left) administers the H1N1 vaccine to retired Sgt. 1st Class Duane Fauntleroy. Officials from the Schweinfurt Army Health Clinic provided more than 20 free H1N1 vaccinations at the entrance to the PX, Jan. 6. Beneficiaries who still have not received the vaccine can walk into the immunization clinic on weekdays. For more information, call DSN 354-6378, CIV 09721-96-6378.

Those who were unable to take advantage of the opportunity to get their H1N1 vaccination can still receive it.

"We have an immunization clinic and we always accept walk-ins for immunizations," said Denman.

Beneficiaries can walk in to the

immunization clinic Monday through Thursday from 8 to 11:30 a.m., from 1 to 3:30 p.m., and Friday from 8 to 11:30 a.m. For more information, call DSN 354-6378, CIV 09721-96-6378.

"Everyone should get their seasonal and H1N1 vaccination," Denman said.



Visit the U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt Web page, www.teamschweinfurt.com, for up-to-date news, events, contact information and much more.



New legislation allows military spouses to establish a permanent residence and carry it with them through each change of station. The legislation can affect how married couples file their taxes.

New law allows spouses to claim same state as service member

Story and photo by
C. TODD LOPEZ
Army News Service

WASHINGTON - New legislation, signed by the president in November, allows military spouses to establish a permanent residence and carry it with them through each change of station.

The Military Spouses Residency Relief Act enables military spouses to do what their service members have long been able to do - claim and maintain residency in one home state, pay income taxes only to that state, and vote as a resident of that state, for the duration of their military career, without regard to where they are stationed.

"The purpose was to allow the spouse to maintain the same domicile as the service member," said Mary Benzinger, senior attorney, Pentagon Army and Air Force Legal Assistance Office.

The benefit of having both husband and wife be able to establish and maintain domiciliary status in the same state - and carry that status wherever they go as a result of military PCS - is two-fold.

First, it simplifies paperwork. In the past, spouses would have to re-establish residency in whatever state they moved to as part of a PCS. They had to pay income tax to that state if they worked, register their vehicle there, and get a driver's license there. Additionally, if their service member maintained permanent domiciliary status in another state, the two might have to file state income taxes separately.

"It allows them to establish a domicile, and carry it with them, every time they PCS,

and not do what you hear a lot of: where the service member stays a resident of Texas his whole career, and she (the spouse) has to be a domiciliary of every place the service member is stationed," Benzinger said. "That's what happened before this. You could never have a constant domicile. You had to be a resident of whatever state you were living in."

Second, in many cases, military members have opted to continue to maintain domiciliary status in one of the states that do not have state income tax: Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas, Washington, Wyoming, New Hampshire and Tennessee. Those service members do not pay state income tax.

The new act would allow military spouses who have been present in one of those states - and established domiciliary status there - to maintain that status along with their service member spouse, and to then also not pay state income tax.

What the act does not allow, however, is for a spouse to "pick" a state where they can claim domiciliary status. Establishing domiciliary status in a state, in nearly every case, requires that the spouse has lived in the state.

"You cannot pick," Benzinger. "You have to synch up, by physical presence and intent to remain."

Being able to adequately defend a claim of residency of one state - especially if doing so to avoid paying income taxes in the state where a spouse is currently living and working - might require more than prior residence. It could also require, among other things, showing intent to return there, land

ownership, driver's licenses, car registration or having voted there.

Additionally, the act does not mean military spouses do not need to pay state income tax. If the state where a spouse maintains domiciliary status under the new act requires civilian residents to pay state income tax, then they must as well. This includes those states where the requirement to pay state income tax by a service member changes if a service member doesn't actually live in the state while serving. The MSRAA, a federal law, does not convey to civilian spouses the benefits extended to service members by individual states.

The MSRAA amendment applies retroactively to tax year 2009. This means that for some spouses - those that can show they met the requirements for domiciliary status for a state they did not live in during 2009 - those spouses may be able to get back tax withholdings from the state where they lived and worked.

The MSRAA is relatively new, and many states have yet to figure out how to deal with military spouse taxpayers who may want refunds, Benzinger said. Additionally, she said while states have in the past been relatively forgiving when considering for tax purposes the claims of nonstate residence by uniformed service members, they might not be so forgiving of civilian spouses.

Before changing or claiming a different state of residence on any forms, Benzinger said service members and their spouses should seek legal advice.

"The real solution is to go see your legal assistance attorney on your installation," Benzinger said.

Taxpayers have options for exemptions

Continued from page 4

2009 Tax Credits

Making work pay credit - Taxpayers who have earned income from work may be able to take this credit. It is 6.2 percent of your earned income and cannot exceed \$400 or \$800 if married filing jointly.

Government retiree credit - Taxpayers who receive government pensions or annuities may be eligible to take this credit. This credit will reduce the Making Work Pay credit.

Finally, taxpayers who received an economic recovery payment do not need to pay taxes on it, but because this payment was really an advanced tax credit, it must be subtracted from any Making Work Pay and Government Retiree credits.

American opportunity education credit. This is a new credit for 2009 and 2010 which modifies the Hope credit, and is available for the first four years of postsecondary education. The maximum credit per student, per year is \$2,500 and part of it may end up being refundable. The amount of the credit will be gradually phased out if modified adjusted gross income is between \$80,000 - \$90,000 and \$160,000 - \$180,000 for married filing jointly.

Beyond these new credits, there have also been changes to the way the standard deduction is calculated. These changes are important, because taxpayers may reduce the amount of their income subject to tax by taking either standard or itemized deductions.

Standard deduction. Generally, the standard deductions depend upon the taxpayer's filing status:

\$5,700 for Single and Married Filing Separate taxpayers

\$11,400 for Married Filing Jointly or Qualifying Widow(er)

\$8,350 for Head of Household

Taxpayers who wouldn't otherwise qualify to itemize their deductions can enjoy a higher standard deduction by adding the following to the above base amounts:

Up to \$500 (\$1,000 if married filing jointly) of any state or local real estate taxes paid that would be an allowable itemized deduction on Schedule A had the taxpayer itemized deductions.

Any state or local sales or excise taxes you paid on the purchase of a new motor vehicle after February 16, 2009, and any net loss from a federally declared disaster.

Personal exemptions. The amount has been increased to \$3,650 for each exemption to which the taxpayer is entitled; however, taxpayers who have high income may lose part of their exemption amount not to exceed a one-third reduction.

Itemized deductions. There are no major changes except that taxpayers will have some of their itemized deductions limited when their adjusted gross income is more than \$166,800 or \$83,400 if married filing separately.

Cash for clunkers payments. Taxpayers who received a \$3,500 or \$4,500 voucher or payment under the CARS program to purchase a new fuel-efficient vehicle will not have to pay any federal income tax on the money they received.

Individual retirement arrangements (IRAs) contributions. Taxpayers can contribute a maximum of \$5,000 or \$6,000, if age 50 or older, annually to traditional or Roth IRAs. The amount contributed by an employer to a SEP or SIMPLE IRA plan will not affect this limit.

Divorced or separated parents. Noncustodial parents claiming an exemption for a child may no longer submit copies of divorce decrees or separation agreements that went into effect after 2008 to the IRS. Instead, a form 8332 must be attached to the return signed by the custodial parent giving the noncustodial parent permission to claim the child's exemption.

Editor's Note: For a full list of exemptions, contact your local tax office.

Soldiers see through walls

by **MATTHEW HICKMAN**
U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command

SAN ANTONIO - Entering a building and clearing rooms may become much safer for Soldiers in combat as Army scientists continue to develop Sense-Through-the-Wall technology to increase situational awareness.

Research, Development and Engineering Command technicians demonstrated Sense-Through-the-Wall radar imaging and many other high-tech gadgets at the Army Strong Zone outside the Alamodome during the buildup to the 2010 All-American Bowl Jan. 9, providing visitors a glimpse of career opportunities and futuristic Army equipment and vehicles.

The radar imaging device emits an electromagnetic wave that penetrates physical barriers. The wave records Doppler movements and sends information to the receiver antenna. The imager then displays the range and general

direction of all targets for the Soldier.

Officials said the technology may be useful in urban areas where many of today's battles occur. Building clearing procedures take a priority in city streets and back alleys. A device that would allow Soldiers to recon a house and determine enemy locations would certainly save lives.

"This is giving Soldiers more awareness," said John Cua, Communications-Electronics Research, Development and Engineering Center, Fort Monmouth, N.J. The technology has been in continuous development for 10 years, but the device has entered into a bidding process and Cua said testing continues to go well.

Although the bidding process has started, RDECOM continues to make improvements to the device, and Cua said Soldiers shouldn't treat it like a silver bullet.

"The Soldiers obviously want an increased range and we're definitely trying to get the equipment lighter," he said. "We don't want to burden the Soldiers with a piece of heavy



Anthony Naia, From the Communications Electronics Research, Development and Engineering Center, demonstrates how to use Sense-Through-the-Wall technology to Secretary of the Army John McHugh (right) and Research, Development and Engineering Command Commander Maj. Gen. Nickolas Justice.

Photo by Tom Faulkner

equipment that replaces another piece of equipment that could save lives."

Soldiers can become effective with the technology in less than two days. The graphic user interface is easy to read, and Cua said the

feedback has been very positive.

"Soldiers would love to have this capability at hand," he said. "If it's something that would help save their own lives and others then they're definitely welcoming it."

Plans promote comprehensive pet care

Continued from page 1

will be the same for all clients and at all military veterinary treatment facilities.

“We present the wellness package ... and provide recommendations based on our judgments as doctors and what we feel is right for each patient,” said Capt. Renee Krebs, officer in charge, Vilseck Branch Veterinary Services. “But in the end, the owners have the final choice in the care of their pets.”

Services provided at the VTF include, but are not limited to, health certificates, out-patient surgical and dental procedures, X-ray diagnostics, ECG diagnostics and routine laboratory testing to include blood, serum, urine and fecal assessments. Additionally, the VTF offers information regarding various veterinarians and clinics on the economy to give patients options and ensure their pet’s safety.

“We provide numerous services, but are limited when it comes to emergency care,” said Krebs. “We are not at this time able to stay open 24 hours, and for that reason we have a list of off-post veterinarians available to the community that speak English and can help in these situations.”

Krebs urged the community to be responsible pet owners by educating themselves on pet care, stating the recently instituted wellness package and the VTF can help.

“Their lives are so much shorter than ours,” said Krebs. “We need to

The Vilseck Veterinary Treatment Facility routinely maintains scheduled appointments regardless of announced delays and road conditions during the winter season. To schedule or confirm an appointment, or to contact the Vilseck Veterinary Treatment Facility, call DSN 476-2370, CIV 09622-83-2370.

protect them.”

In an age of constant change, especially within the military community, many family members place increasing importance on the role of pets in their lives.

Ensuring a pet is happy and healthy can provide a safe and rewarding environment for every member of the household.



Capt. Leah Tingley (right) of the Vilseck Branch Veterinary Services checks the vital signs of her patient, Max, as his owner, Kelley Cunningham looks on. Max was brought to the Vilseck Veterinary Treatment Facility for preventative treatment of dysplasia, on par with the new wellness program, which allows more interaction with veterinarians and their patients in promoting good health and preventative treatments.

AFC funding increases benefits of family programs

Continued from page 1

The Family Programs directorate within FMWRC is responsible for developing all family programs and services within the Army.

And such military families are resilient, said FMWRC officials; however, they require assistance to help them meet their needs.

The Covenant’s commitment enhances that resiliency by providing support, training, care and social interaction opportunities through an established and resourced infrastructure. The result: delivering quality programs and services in a consistent and seamless manner.

“The Army Family Covenant has brought greater awareness of families and recognition of their service and sacrifice,” said Lynn McCollum, director of FMWRC Family Programs. “Families tell us we have great programs; there was no need to create new programs, only to fully fund and staff existing programs consistently.

“Therefore, we have expanded our budget over the previous two years to significantly improve the existing family programs, pay for these improvements in service and increase the number of people who directly support execution of these services,” McCollum said.

“A great example is respite care for families with exceptional needs,” she noted. “For the first time, this program has been fully funded.”

These programs and services are critical in families coping with frequent deployments, stressors resulting from unfamiliarity with Army life or the installation, and the ultimate fear ... loss of a loved one.

A major tenet of the Covenant is a commitment to standardize family programs and services throughout the service. One example: implementing Army Community Service staffing and programs at installations worldwide, resulting in the fully funding of 477 positions needed to meet operational and staffing shortfalls.

“The Army, through the Covenant, has developed numerous programs that are



Eoin Oravetz and Andre Ross couldn't keep their feet on the ground during an Exceptional Family Member Program Summer Camp held at U.S. Army Garrison Heidelberg, Germany. Army Family Covenant funding was used to organize the first summer camp program for EFMP families there, with 12 children participating in activities such as therapeutic-riding, pottery-making, therapeutic music sessions, and dance and movement classes.

Photo by Jason Austin

Additionally, the FMWRC Family Plans Directorate has forged greater relationships with the Army’s Chaplain Corps, as the Covenant created an additional 33 Family Life Chaplain positions meant to deliver family ministry, training and marriage enhancement programs.

Similarly, the Strong Bonds program includes a series of marriage and family skill-building programs designed to increase marital satisfaction, reduce divorce rates, and enhance Soldier and family readiness.

“We know that strong relationships have been proven to be directly related to increased resiliency. Strong Bonds is a proven method to building those attachments,” said Lt. Col. Tom Waynick, FMWRC staff chaplain. “I am proud that we at FMWRC are supporting this great commander-chaplain lead program.”

To support Soldiers and families during the deployment and return cycle, the Army has increased the number of Military Family Life Consultants working directly with Army Community Service, National Guard Headquarters and Reserve Regional Commands. These consultants help families during reintegration, provide outreach to Guard and Reserve families, and respond to specific requests for support when there has been a unit death or injury.

“There are a myriad of programs and services the Army Family Covenant pledges to provide our Soldiers and families,” said McCollum. “We ensure our communities receive the best possible service; we listen to their concerns to develop and implement programs that address their requirements.”

“We want to ensure every family is provided the resources they need to make them more resilient through difficult or stressful times in their lives,” she added. “The Army Family Covenant promises this support. Soldiers and families deserve the very best and we continually strive to be the conduit that provides the family programs and services to fulfill that promise.”

specifically targeted to improve our quality of support and service,” McCollum said. “One area where we have invested much time and resources is the ArmyOneSource.com Web site, which provides a single access point to programs and services for families on Army installations and for those people who are geographically (separated) from a post.”

Another notable service the Army has implemented since that 2007 signing: the establishment of Survivor Outreach Services, which is a standardized, decentralized approach to improving support for survivors of fallen Soldiers. It recognized the need to develop survivor support coordinators and financial counselors to improve outreach, referrals, life skills, investment education and estate planning.

Also developed and implemented through the Covenant was the addition of nearly 1,100 family readiness support assistants within family readiness groups, which are normally comprised of Soldiers’ spouses from within battalion- or brigade-sized units who meet to discuss and resolve issues affecting families such organizations.

And Soldier and Family Assistance Centers were established at Army communities owning Warrior Transition Units. These centers provide a facility for wounded warriors and their families to gather for mutual support to aid in the physical, spiritual, and mental healing process. Services provided within the centers include transition support, as well as financial child care and education counseling.

Fuel prices overseas are compared with AAFES, stateside norms



Continued from page 1

Without the Fuel Ration Card Program, authorized personnel assigned to Germany could be subject to fuel prices, found on the local economy, which can easily be more than 100 percent greater than those at AAFES pumps.

“I believe AAFES offers a better deal on fuel prices compared to German prices,” said 1st Lt. Pascale McGraw of HHC, 5th Signal Command at Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

While AAFES Overseas DoE fuel prices include unique incremental costs associated

Staff Sgt. Andrew Klein, Company C, 1st MI Battalion, pumps fuel at the Mainz-Kastel AAFES gas station.

with providing fuel to authorized drivers, the Fuel Ration Card Program and market-based pricing provide tremendous value.

These bona fide costs vary by country. For example, costs related to the Fuel Ration Card/Gas Management program, as well as labor costs, depreciation and other miscellaneous expenses account for 30 cents per gallon of fuel dispensed in Germany.

AAFES discontinued using the paper fuel coupon ration book and vehicle registration form in December 2008 at the behest of the German government.

The start-up cost to transfer to a fuel card program, at the behest of the German government, is factored into each liter of fuel dispensed.

This transition to the plastic debit card required the procurement of computer programs, main frames, Verifones, printers and CPUs for each gas station. AAFES also created a Web-based online service program for customers to log on and check their ration amount.

The process to have all AAFES gas stations computers and all Esso gas station computers to connect with AAFES headquarters in Dallas took approximately a year and a half to implement.

“It was a big project,” said Robert Konik, AAFES Europe Information Technology.

“I like that I don’t have to pay for gas off post and pay German prices,” said Williams as he closed his car door and drove off.